

COVID 19

School Sector Update



March 11, 2021



Welcome

Dear school partners,

Since March 2020, we have worked together to navigate the challenges of COVID-19. Through this partnership, we heard the need for better communication from public health to the K-12 sector.

To achieve this, we have created a new BCCDC website specific to K-12: www.bccdc.ca/schools. This website includes information from public health for parents and students, school staff, and administrators and districts.

This bulletin is also a new tool to provide regular updates directly to school partners. Going forward, you can expect updates on what is happening provincially and in K-12 schools.

On behalf of our team at BCCDC, and regional public health teams across the province, thank you for your continued partnership.

Updates

BC Centre for Disease Control

- Launched a new K-12 Schools and COVID-19 [website](#), featuring resources for [families](#), [staff](#) and [administrators](#).
 - This includes a new resource to [explain contact tracing in schools](#).
 - There is also a listing of [public notifications of school exposures](#).
- Provided new information on [COVID-19 variants](#).
- Updated the [Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings](#) on February 18th.

The Province of BC

Updated the provincial [COVID-19 Immunization Plan](#) on March 1st.

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Learning about COVID-19 & Schools

COVID-19 Safety & BC Schools: What we know so far

We are continuing to learn about COVID-19 in School-Aged Children:

- Fewer school-aged children (5 to 18 years old) have tested positive for COVID-19 compared to adults. Younger children make up a smaller proportion of cases than older children.
- Serious COVID-19 outcomes are less common in school-aged children
- COVID-19 virus has a relatively low case rate among school-aged children

An infographic explaining this information is available [here](#).

COVID-19 Variants

It is normal for viruses to change over time, leading to new versions or variants. New variants have been identified since the beginning of the pandemic. COVID-19 variants have been detected across BC, including some people who attend school. So far, these cases are only a small proportion of all COVID-19 cases in the province.

The new variants spread the same way as the original virus, but some COVID-19 variants spread more easily. Because of this, it is even more important to continue to follow the health and safety measures in place in schools. More information on COVID-19 variants is available [here](#).

The PICS Study: Personal Impacts of COVID-19 Survey

BC Children's Hospital Research Institute is doing a survey to understand more about the thoughts, feelings and actions of people living through this pandemic. Anyone over the age of 8 can participate, and the researchers are interested in hearing from children directly. Learn more [here](#).

Tracking COVID-19 for Safer Schools Study

Vancouver School Board staff members are invited to participate in the Tracking COVID-19 for Safer Schools study. Led by BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, this study seeks to determine the extent to which school workers can be exposed to COVID-19 as part of their occupations. Learn more [here](#).

Living Safely in a Pandemic

Longer days and warmer weather are sure signs that spring holidays are approaching. While now isn't the time to travel, there are many ways to safely enjoy spring holidays close to home. Visit the [Safer Celebrations and Ceremonies](#) page to learn more.

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Wellness Tips

With so much happening and so much uncertainty in daily life, it's normal to feel worried and overwhelmed. It's important to look after mental health and well-being during COVID-19. Links to mental well-being resources for children, youth, parents and caregivers are available on the [BCCDC Mental Well-being Page](#).

1. The [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](#) offers tips for caring for younger children, parents and caregivers.
2. [Foundry BC](#) offers support for youth 12-24 years old.

Public Health Profile

Public health includes a diverse group of professions that have unique training, skills and experiences. They include doctors, nurses, epidemiologists and health promotion specialists. Across the province, public health professionals work together to support schools impacted by COVID-19.

Caitlin

Communicable Disease Specialist, Interior Health



Training

Caitlin is a Registered Nurse with 11 years of experience. She has worked in public health in the Northern Health Authority and Interior Health Authority. Her experience includes school immunizations and early years programming as a public health nurse.

Working to keep schools safe

Caitlin is the Schools Follow-Up Lead on Interior Health's COVID-19 Response Team. She works with [Medical Health Officers](#) and [epidemiologists](#).

Caitlin helps schools and school districts know what to do when they are impacted by COVID-19. This includes working with superintendents and school officials, directing contact tracing and notifications, and supporting families who are affected.

Caitlin is also a member of the Rapid Response Team supporting school districts within Interior Health.

Translations

[American Sign Language](#)

[Lire en français \(read in French\)](#)

[阅读简体中文版 \(read in Simplified Chinese\)](#)

[ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਪੜ੍ਹੋ \(read in Punjabi\)](#)