

## **Maple Hill School Communicable Disease Policy (Updated from September 2024)**

The Maple Hill School Communicable Disease Plan is a policy to follow in order to help curb the spread of communicable diseases that may spread in a school setting including, but not limited to, COVID-19. Guidance for this plan stems from documentation provided by both WorkSafe BC, the BCCDC, and the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care. Any member of the Maple Hill School community is to be aware of this policy and can submit questions or concerns to the Principal of Maple Hill School by booking an appointment by calling the office at 604-285-9665 or by emailing the principal at [eric.dinozzi@maplehill.edu](mailto:eric.dinozzi@maplehill.edu). This policy will be communicated directly with students during the beginning of the school year, will be communicated directly with staff prior to the start of the school year, as well as emailed to all members of the Maple Hill School community.

### **Prevention Strategies**

**Vaccinations:** Vaccinations remain an effective tool in preventing the transmission of certain communicable diseases. Maple Hill School recommends that students, staff, and caregivers receive all of the vaccinations that they are eligible for. Information about vaccines and when people are eligible to receive them can be found at the Immunize BC website (<https://immunizebc.ca/>). Any member of the Maple Hill School community having difficulty navigating the website or booking appointments can message the school for some assistance. Maple Hill School may be asked as part of the Support Services for Schools order and the Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools to offer space for public health nurses to carry-out vaccinations.

**Masks:** Masks or other face coverings are not required to attend Maple Hill School for staff, students, or caregivers. Members of the Maple Hill School community can feel free to use masks if they so choose but this is strictly a personal preference. Should students or staff want a mask, we will have a small number of masks on site should people like to use one or if the mask they normally use breaks.

**Staying Home When Sick:** Staying home when sick remains a fundamental aspect of preventing communicable diseases when sick. Any student or staff member if they are feeling ill should stay home if they are sick. If a student or staff member is displaying symptoms of illness that will limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities should refrain from coming into school.

It is important for students to note that classes do not stop for you should you be out for an extended period of time. It is a student's responsibility to make sure they are aware of what is going on with their classes and communicating with their teachers.

Staff who are away are free to connect through Microsoft Teams to their classes should they choose as the same isolation policies apply to staff as well.

Should anyone begin to feel sick at school, they will be escorted to the principal's office where there is a couch and caregivers will be contacted to ensure that the student or staff member can get some safely. Any surfaces that the person was touching prior to being escorted to the principal's office will be wiped

down and disinfected. School will work with staff members who are feeling ill to get home in a safe manner.

**Hygiene:** It is important for all members of the Maple Hill School Community to practice good hygiene techniques. Every room will have a hand sanitizing station at the front of each room. Staff are encouraged to remind students to frequently wash their hands, especially prior to eating or after using the washroom. Students and staff are also reminded to practice proper hygiene when needing to cough or sneeze by making sure you are coughing into your elbow or arm or sneezing into tissue paper and then immediately disposing of said tissue paper. Everyone is also reminded to refrain from touching your face in order to help curb the potential spread of viruses.

**Cleaning and Disinfection:** All frequently used surfaces will be wiped down and disinfected daily to help curb the spread of communicable diseases. If there are bodily fluids to be cleaned, staff will wear disposable gloves, wash hands before and after removing gloves and appropriate PPE.

**Ventilation and Air Exchange:** Maple Hill School does not own the building that it resides in and as such follows the landlord and their management companies schedule in regards to maintenance of the HVAC system. For days where ventilation may be an issue, each room can be equipped with industrial strength fans to circulate air flow. If there is a power outage or an issue with the HVAC, the school will open all doors to allow air flow and have staff monitoring in order to prevent security issues. Fans will not be used in closed rooms with no ventilation.

**Transportation:** Maple Hill School does not operate buses but will make sure any transportation that is secured for student travel follows all proper guidelines.

**Visitors and Community Use:** All visitors and/or community groups using the Maple Hill School space are expected to follow the applicable measures in this document.

**Gatherings and Events:** All gatherings and events, including those away from the Maple Hill School campus, will have policies in line with the policies outlined in this document.

**Curriculum, Programs, and Activities:** Activities that are carried out in school will have appropriate communicable disease prevention practices that are specific to the activity.

**Field Trips:** Students and staff on field trips should follow the schools communicable disease prevention plans or the field trip destinations policies, whichever is more stringent.

**Personal Space:** Both staff and students are encouraged to respect each other's personal space (the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person) at all times.

**Food Safety:** Staff and students are encouraged not to share items that have been in contact with the mouth (straws, dirty forks, cigarettes, vaping devices). For food that is sent out by staff, there is always a staff member with FOODSAFE Level 1 certification on hand to ensure proper food handling practices are implemented.

**Functional Closures and Public Health Closures:** If there is a situation where a communicable disease has spread which causes a lack of staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision and support, the Maple Hill School authority may call for a functional closure of a school which is a temporary closure. In this type of event, both the schools Medical Health Officer and the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care will be contacted before implementing a functional closure.

A public health closure is the temporary closing of a school ordered by a Medical Health Officer when they determine it is necessary to prevent the excessive transmission of a communicable disease.

If anyone would like more information about disease management and other health related information please check the Healthlink BC website (<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/>), the BCCDC website (<http://www.bccdc.ca/>), or the local health authority (<http://www.vch.ca/public-health/children-youth-schools/school-health>)