



1325 East Keith Road  
 North Vancouver, BC, V7J 1J3  
 (604) 980-1205 Tel  
 (604) 980-1805 Fax

## North Star Montessori COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

### Understanding the Risk

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable diseases that may circulate in a workplace include Covid-19, norovirus and seasonal influenza.

Covid-19 will continue to circulate in our population however with high immunization rates in BC, as well as emerging treatment options for people at higher risk of serious disease, we can transition to managing Covid-19 as we do other serious respiratory infections in the community. Preventing communicable diseases involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission at North Star. It also involves implementing additional measures when advised to do so by Public Health during periods of elevated risk.

The risk level of certain communicable diseases, including Covid-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within a certain workplace. Specific policies for specific diseases will be developed as required, including but not limited to Covid-19.

North Star's Administration has reviewed industry-specific protocols, measures, practices, and policies from WorkSafeBC, BCCDC, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with frontline staff has implemented protocols to reduce the risks.

We have a plan in place to monitor risks and watch for updates from WorkSafeBC, BCCDC and the Ministry of Education. We make changes to our policies and procedures as necessary.

As a supportive school environment, staff will model personal practices, share reliable information from the BCCDC, PHO and VCH to parents and caregivers, promote personal practices in the school and ensure individual choices for personal practices are respected.

### Implementing Measures, Practices and Policies to Reduce the Risk

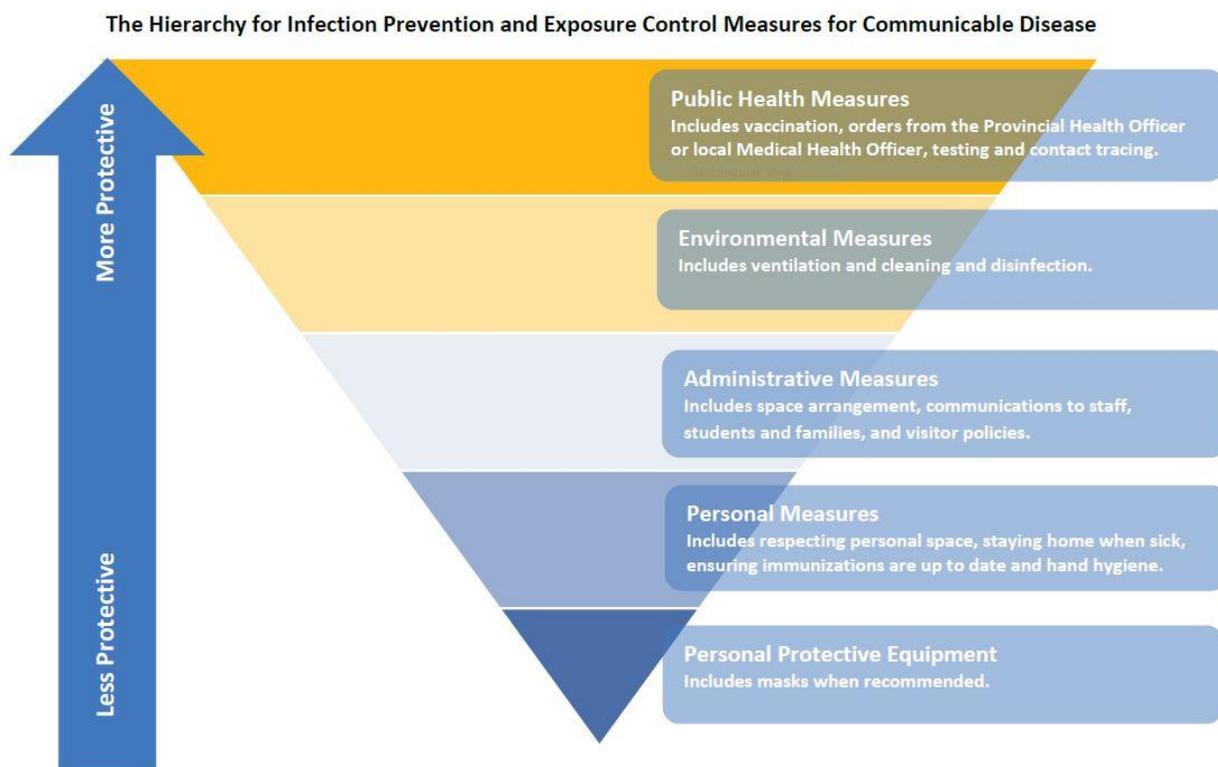
To prevent the spread of communicable diseases, North Star Montessori has implemented the following policies. Policy details are contained in the North Star Montessori Policy Manual.

- Immunization and Communicable Diseases
- Student Illness Policy
- Staff Illness & Substitute Procedure

Staff illness & substitute procedures are distributed to staff and reviewed with them annually by the Manager of School Operations.

For more information on Covid-19 protocols and procedures please see the Covid-19 Health & Safety Procedures Handbook for Staff & Parents.

The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures that should be taken to reduce the transmission of Covid-19 in schools. Control measures at the top are more effective and protective than those at the bottom. By implementing a combination of measures at each level, the risk of Covid-19 is substantially reduced.



### Public Health Measures

- Information and measures are communicated to the school community via email, school information system, posters etc. to support awareness and compliance.

### Environmental Measures

- Learning spaces are re-arranged during times of high risk to maximize the space available and to avoid people directly facing one another (where possible).
- Frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least 1x/day. Surfaces touched by fewer people are cleaned 1x/day.
- Practices are in place to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces when they are dirty.

### Cleaning & Disinfecting

We have implemented cleaning protocols for all common areas and surfaces. This includes the frequency that these items must be cleaned.

- Frequently touched objects and surfaces (chairs, doorknobs, light switches, handles, countertops, desks, tables, phones, keyboards, touch screens, toilets, faucets) will be cleaned and disinfected minimum once in a 24 hour period.
- Practices are in place to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces when they are dirty.
- Custodial company cleans each evening Monday to Friday. Deep cleaning occurs during Winter, Spring & Summer breaks.
- Frequency and areas/surfaces of daily cleaning will be increased and electrostatic spraying may be used during times of high risk.
- Practices are in place to clean and disinfect any surfaces a person's bodily fluids have contacted after they displayed signs of illness.

### **Ventilation & Air Exchange**

A combination of an outdoor air supply and filtration can significantly influence indoor air quality.

- HVAC system was updated and replaced mid-2020 and is regularly maintained by the landlord.
- High quality air purifiers are throughout the school as an added precaution.
- Windows are opened when weather permits.
- In the event the HVAC system is temporarily compromised, air purifiers are already in place and operating and windows would be opened

### **Administrative Measures**

#### **Personal Space & Space Arrangements**

- School gatherings and events may be held without specific capacity limits.
- Extra-curricular activities will resume .
- Bus drivers, staff and students may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on a bus used to transport students.
- Curriculum programs and activities operate in alignment with the Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings.
- In the event that a parent or non-staff member enters the facility, they will be encouraged to wear a mask (individual choice), practice diligent hand-hygiene and be respectful of others personal space when in the school.
- School administrators will ensure that staff, other adults entering the school, parents, caregivers, and students are aware that they should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. This will be supported by communicating the importance of everyone doing a health check. (a person regularly checking to ensure they, or their child, are not experiencing symptoms of illness that would limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities before coming to school to prevent spread of communicable diseases.
- A person's choice with respect to masks use will be supported and respected.
- Staggered start and transitional times have been implemented to prevent crowding.
- Students will be regularly reminded to respect others personal space.
- Classrooms and learning environment configurations will be arranged to best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.
- Students and staff will not share food.

- Staff meetings may be held in person.
- There are processes in place so ensure substitutes and visitors are aware of the school's health & safety measures and their responsibility to follow them at all times.

## **Drop-off and Pick-up**

### ***Elementary***

- Parents are responsible for completing a daily health check of their child(ren) prior to coming to school. These health checks do not need to be submitted. The BCCDC K-12 daily health check app for students can be accessed at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/covid/daily-health-check-english.pdf>. The BC self-assessment tool can be accessed at <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>. If a student is unwell, they should stay home.
- Students will have staggered start times. Parents are not permitted to enter the school with their child except as scheduled or pre-arranged at drop-off.
- Staggered start times must be observed so that students are not entering or exiting the facility at the same time. This includes siblings. Please be on time. Late entry is permitted only after all other groups of students have entered the school.
- Parents may drop-off students at the front gate allowing them to exit the car on the east side of the street so no students are required to cross the street.
- Once the gate is open, Elementary students (grade 1-6) can proceed up the stairs to the front door where they will be greeted by a staff member.
- Once students put away their belongings, change into their indoor shoes, and line up they proceed directly to the classroom.
- Upon entering the classroom, students are required to wash their hands with soap and water.
- A staff member will bring students downstairs to the front gate for pick-up. Parents should not wait on the steps/ramp to the gate and should avoid crowding.
- If remaining in your car, you may enter the pick-up area directly in front of the gate and your child will be dismissed to immediately enter your vehicle.
- Once your child has been dismissed, please clear the general area including the grassy strip along the building. This includes families that may have a child in another class that has not yet been dismissed.
- On assigned days for pick-up at the classroom door, parents will enter the school, line-up outside their child's classroom, collect their child from the teacher and proceed to the exit.

### ***Casa***

- Parents are responsible for completing a daily health check of their child(ren) prior to coming to school. The BCCDC K-12 daily health check app for students can be accessed at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/covid/daily-health-check-english.pdf>. The BC self-assessment tool can be accessed at <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>. If a student is unwell, they should stay home.
- Students will have staggered start times. Parents are not permitted to enter the school with their child except as scheduled or pre-arranged at drop-off.

- Staggered start times must be observed so that students are not entering or exiting the facility at the same time. This includes siblings. Please be on-time. Late entry is permitted only after all other groups of students have entered the school.
- Parents will line-up outside of the street level gate and wait for their classroom teacher to greet their child. Parents should not wait on the steps/ramp to the gate and should avoid crowding.
- The group will proceed upstairs together.
- Once students put away their belongings, change into their indoor shoes, and line up they proceed directly to the classroom.
- Upon entering the classroom, students are required to wash their hands with soap and water.
- A staff member will bring students downstairs to the front gate for pick-up. Parents should not wait on the steps/ramp to the gate and should avoid crowding.
- Once you child has been dismissed, please clear the general area including the grassy strip along the building. This includes families that may have a child in another class that has not yet been dismissed.
- On assigned days for pick-up at the classroom door, parents will enter the school, line-up outside their child's classroom, collect their child from the teacher and proceed to the exit.

### **Hygiene and Handwashing Policies & Procedures**

Rigorous handwashing with plain soap and water or an effective hand sanitizer reduces the spread of illness.

We have policies that specify when staff must wash their hands and we have communicated good hygiene practices to staff. Frequent handwashing and good hygiene practices are essential to reduce the spread of communicable disease. BCCDC handwashing posters are displayed in the washroom and at handwashing stations.

We have reviewed the information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and have policies and procedures in place to ensure adherence to guidelines. North Star Montessori has protocols in place that specify when staff and students must wash their hands. Teachers communicate good hygiene practices to students. Frequent handwashing and good hygiene practices are essential to reduce the spread of communicable diseases.

During a period of elevated risk, North Star Montessori may implement additional policies and practices in accordance with the highest recommendations from Public Health.

Hygiene:

- Follow BCCDC's handwashing poster guidelines as displayed in the washrooms and at handwashing stations
- Enforcing vigorous handwashing hygiene regularly, including before and after eating, using the washroom, etc.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue. Throw away tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.

### How to Hand wash

- Wet hands with warm (not hot or cold) running water
- Apply liquid soap or foam soap
- Lather soap covering all surfaces of hands, rubbing vigorously for 20-30 seconds
- Rinse thoroughly under running water
- Pat hands dry thoroughly with paper towel
- Use paper towel to turn off the tap

### How to Use Hand sanitizer

- Ensure hands are visibly clean (if soiled, follow handwashing steps)
- Apply about a loonie-sized amount or 1-2 sprays to your hands
- Rub all surfaces of you hand and wrist until completely dry

## **Illness Practices/What To Do When Sick**

### **What To Do When Sick**

Staff, students or other persons who are exhibiting new symptoms of illness (including symptoms of Covid-19 or gastrointestinal illness) should stay home and follow the BCCDC guidelines in the below links.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing/when-to-get-a-covid-19-test>  
<https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>

Staff, children, or other persons in a school setting who test positive for Covid-19 should follow the guidance on the BCCDC website through the following link: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/if-you-have-covid-19> as to how long they should self-isolate. They can return to school when they no longer needs to self-isolate as long as symptoms have improved, and they are well enough to participate in regular activities. Schools should not require a health care provider note (ie. doctor's note) to confirm health status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practice.

Staff, children, or other persons in a school setting can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (ie. seasonal allergies) or symptoms have improved enough where they feel well enough to return to regular activities and their fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (ie. ibuprofen, acetaminophen). Information specific to Covid-19 is available at <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>.

### **What To Do When Sick at School/Work**

If a staff member, student or other person develops symptoms of illness at school and is unable to participate in regular activities, they should go home as soon as possible.

If they are unable to leave immediately:

1. Provide them with a mask if they do not have one but would like to wear one.
2. Symptomatic individuals should separate themselves into an area away from others. Students will be supervised.

3. Contact the individual's parent or caregiver (if necessary) to pick them up as soon as possible.
4. Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g. mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene.
5. Maintain a comfortable distance from others and continue to wear their mask while they wait to be picked up.
6. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the ill individual was separated and any areas used by them (e.g. classroom, bathroom, common areas).
7. Request the individual stay home until symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities.

Parents or caregivers must pick-up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.

The management of Covid-19 in the community is now more aligned with the management of other serious respiratory infections. Staff, students or other persons in the school setting who are exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19 should stay home until they are well enough to participate in regular activities. Staff, children, or other persons can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (ie. seasonal allergies) or symptoms have improved enough to where you feel well enough to return to regular activities and their fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (ie. acetaminophen, ibuprofen). If you are unsure or concerned about your symptoms, connect with your health care provider or call 8-1-1.

## Personal Measures

### **Health Awareness**

Everyone at school should practice health awareness. This includes staying home when sick or unable to participate fully in routine activities. It also means a daily health check to ensure you (or your child) are not experiencing symptoms of illness, including but not limited to Covid-19 symptoms.

### **Masks and Face Coverings**

The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students and visitors. A person's choice will be supported and respected. North Star will continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one, or who become ill at school.

### **Hand Hygiene**

Staff and students will be encouraged to practice hand hygiene upon school classroom entry and before/after breaks and eating, using the washroom and using frequently touched shared equipment.

### **Vaccines**

Vaccines are important tools to protect against many serious communicable diseases. Vaccination protects from serious illness due to Covid-19 and is the most effective way to reduce the impact of Covid-19 on our communities. All Covid-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada protect against serious complications, including from the omicron variant. It is important to get all recommended vaccine doses to get the most effective protection against serious cases of Covid-19. People 6 months and older are

eligible for Covid-19 vaccines. More information about Covid-19 vaccines is available through the below links.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine>

<https://immunizebc.ca/who-and-when>

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/vaccination-and-the-workplace>

### **Respiratory Etiquette**

Staff and students should:

- Cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve, or a tissue.
- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.
- Refrain from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes or vaping devices.

### **Personal Space**

Staff and students should be encouraged to respect others personal space (the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person).

### **Sharing Food, Beverages & Other Items that Touch the Mouth**

Staff and students should be encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g. food, drinks, unwashed utensils). Shared-use items that touch the mouth should be cleaned between use by different individuals (e.g., water bottles, instrument mouth pieces).

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

- The decision to wear a mask beyond when it is recommended by public health is a personal one, based on individual preference.
- Some staff and students may choose to continue to wear a non-medical mask or face covering throughout the day or for certain activities.
- The choice of staff and students to choose whether they practice additional personal prevention measures will be respected.
- Masks are available for those that have forgotten theirs.

### **Communicate Measures, Practices and Policies**

North Star will ensure that everyone entering the workplace, including workers from other employers, are aware of communicable disease protocols and knows how to keep themselves safe while at the workplace.

We have training in place to ensure everyone is trained in workplace policies and procedures and all workers receive the policies for staying home when sick.

We have posted signage throughout the school on effective hygiene practices and we have posted signage at the main entrance indicating who is restricted from entering the premises, including visitors and workers with symptoms.

All staff are trained on the workplace procedures to ensure policies and procedures are being followed. Anyone with concerns about implementation and adherence to them are asked to speak to the Head of School or Manager of School Operations immediately.

All families receive communication regarding illness policies and procedures. Families must call in every day that their child is absent and if due to illness, provide symptoms. Vancouver Coast Health “Sneezes & Diseases” fact sheet resource is used to communicate information to families.

We will also direct students and staff to consult with office health authorities for up-to-date information regarding a public health issue.

To protect privacy, identifying information about individual cases of illness will not be communicated to the community, except through the direction of Vancouver Coastal Health.

### **Trauma-Informed Practice**

Trauma-informed practice is a compassionate lens of understanding that is helpful to all children, youth and adults, especially those who have experienced traumatic events including the emotional and traumatic impact of a pandemic. Trauma-informed practice includes:

- Providing inclusive and compassionate learning environments
- Understanding coping strategies
- Supporting independence
- Helping to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual needs of the students and staff

Some students may have experienced elements of trauma during the pandemic. Educators and support staff should be aware of changes in student behavior, including trauma-related behaviours which may include fear; hyperactivity; aggression; body aches and pain; depression; self-harming behaviours; excessive shyness; or withdrawal. To support educators and staff in identifying and responding to the needs of the students who have experienced trauma, the Ministry has created trauma-informed practice resources that are available on the erase (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) website:

<https://mytrainingbc.ca/traumainformedpractice/> and  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase/mental-health>.

### **Reinforcing Personal Prevention Practices**

- Regular reminders are provided to students, families and staff about the importance of completing a daily health check, staying home when sick and following public health recommendations.
- Parents are responsible for completing a daily health check of their child(ren) prior to coming to school. The BCCDC K-12 daily health check app for students can be accessed at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/covid/daily-health-check-english.pdf>. The BC self-assessment tool can be accessed at <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>. If a student is unwell they should stay home.

- Staff demonstrate and model how to practice personal prevention measures at school (ie. wearing a mask, hand hygiene etc.).
- Trusted information from the BC Centre for Disease Control is shared, including Covid-19 vaccine information for people 6 months and older. Please click on BCCDC link:  
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine>

## School Closures

In the event the school closes due to a risk of communicable illness, North Star will follow the recommendations and/or requirements of the Public Health Officer, local health authorities, or Ministry of Education. There is a possibility that classes may go online or school may close if there are too many people absent to remain safely and effectively open.

There are two possible types of school closures:

Health Closure of a school, which is determined by the local health authority.

Functional Closure of a school, which is determined by the school due to a lack of staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, support, and/or custodial services to ensure the health & safety of students. This would likely be due to a high absenteeism of all staff or certain employees required for a school to function and the inability to replace those absences.

Functional school closures will be a measure of last resort, undertaken ONLY when the best efforts to reorganize staffing are unsuccessful. We will communicate out to specific students and families affected or to the whole school community if we are required to move online.

## Monitoring the Workplace and Updating Measure & Safeguards

Things may change as our school operates. If we identify a new area of concern, or if it seems like something isn't working, we will take steps to update our policies and procedures and involve workers in this process.

We have a plan in place to monitor risks and watch for updates from WorkSafeBC, BCCDC and the Ministry of Education. We make changes to our policies and procedures as necessary.

Workers know to go to Health & Safety Designate with health and safety concerns which are brought to the Head of School on a monthly basis unless immediate attention is required.

When resolving any safety issues, administration will involve staff & faculty.

We have regular check-ins with staff and on-going risk assessment occurs.