

Fraser Health COVID-19 School Update – winter 2021

Keep our schools safe for staff and students.

As COVID-19 continues to be a concern, we know many of you have questions about the safety of our schools. It's important to remember that **COVID-19 in schools is a direct reflection of the number of cases in the wider community**. Fraser Health has been supporting schools to manage COVID-19 exposures and is grateful for the commitment schools have made to reduce the risk of COVID-19 by **following health and safety plans**.

While COVID-19 has been challenging for all, **educators and families have shown resilience and adaptability**. Together, we can ensure schools remain a **safe and welcoming environment** for staff and students. We must all follow public health measures to reduce our chance of getting sick and bringing the virus into the school.

How can I prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools?

For parents:

- Only socialize with the people you live with.
- Do not invite friends or family to your house.
- Do not host or go to play dates.
- Help older family members learn to connect with others online.
- Remind everyone to wash their hands and avoid touching their face.
- Wear a mask when in public indoor spaces.
- Learn about ways to wear a [mask with a head covering](#).



For staff and students:

- Do a daily health check and stay home when sick.
- Get tested, even with mild symptoms.
- If you need to self-isolate, stay away from others in your household.
- Follow your school's safety plan.
- Wash hands and stay physically distant where possible.
- Stay within your own cohort or learning group where possible.

Your Questions Answered.



Dr. Ariella Zbar, Fraser Health Medical Health Officer, answers some of our most frequently asked questions about COVID-19 and schools.

Interested in learning more? Visit our [school exposures](#) page for more Q&As. Translated versions are available in: Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Hindi and Punjabi.

Is it safe for my child to attend school?

Schools have multiple layers of infection prevention and control measures that are put in place by school leadership teams with the support of public health. Examples of these measures include ventilation, cleaning, set-up of classrooms, limiting the number of interactions at school, as well as personal protective measures such as hand hygiene and masking. It is important to remember that school exposures are a reflection of COVID-19 transmission in the community. The more transmission we see in the community, the more likely it is that COVID-19 positive cases will come to school.

What happens if there is a COVID-19 exposure at my school?

In the event there is a confirmed COVID-19 exposure at your school:

- The school district, school and parents will be notified that a person confirmed to have COVID-19 attended the school while infectious.
- A classroom, learning group or cohort may be asked to self-monitor for signs and symptoms.
- Close contacts will be identified by Public Health and asked to self-isolate.

What does it mean if my school receives an Early Exposure Letter from Fraser Health?

If you receive this letter, it means an individual at your school is confirmed to have COVID-19. This letter lets you know that Public Health is aware of this and we are completing our case and contact management. **It does not mean your child is at increased risk of COVID-19.** Please continue to attend school. If through our investigation we identify anyone who was directly exposed and are at increased risk of COVID-19, we will contact you directly soon after you receive the notification letter.

Why can there be so much time between the school exposure dates and receiving an Early Notification Letter?

It is important to understand there will always be a time gap between an early notification and an exposure date. This is because of the time it takes for a person to develop symptoms, realize they are sick, get tested and receive their results. Contact tracing begins when lab results are received by Public Health. For a school exposure, contact tracing is typically complete within 48 hours. For this reason, **it is imperative that staff and students are tested as early as possible, even with mild symptoms.** This way, we receive the results sooner and can act sooner.

Together we can keep our schools safe.

Interested in learning more? Visit our [School resources for parents and teachers](#) page

For testing information, visit fraserhealth.ca/covid19testing