

# Communicable Disease Orientation Checklist for First Nations Schools

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This checklist is provided by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) to support First Nations communities and schools in planning their communicable disease orientation for staff, other adults (including volunteers and teacher candidates), students, and families. It is adapted from a resource developed by the BC Ministry of Education. FNESC and FNSA issued a previous version in September of 2020.

Orientation sessions should provide a comprehensive overview of the key principles and guidelines outlined in the resources listed below, as well as information on how they will be implemented within the school:

- [Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)
- [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)
- [WorkSafeBC Communicable Disease Prevention: A Guide for Employers](#)
- The reopening plan for your school (School Plan)

Key considerations from the first three guideline documents are provided in FNESC and FNSA's [First Nations Schools Reopening Considerations and Template](#) but please consult the above documents on a regular basis as the guidance may be updated over time. The fourth document, the School Plan, will be specific to your school.

If appropriate for your school, local First Nation leadership as well as representatives from other departments internal to your First Nation (e.g. Health) should be invited to attend the orientation.

Schools should establish a health and safety committee prior to the orientation session. At the beginning of the school year, holding more frequent health and safety meetings can help identify and address any concerns in a timely manner.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

- Adopt a trauma-informed approach:
  - If possible, consider having an employee trained in trauma-informed practice available during the orientation and provide information on how staff, students and families can access counselling services and mental health supports.
- Highlight the process used to develop the School Plan.
- Discuss the importance of implementing communicable disease prevention measures that promote equity and inclusion and outline how these principles are reflected in the School Plan.
- Review the communicable disease guidelines and School Plan, and describe what a school day will look like with the new guidelines (e.g., interactions between peers and staff, traffic flow throughout the school, transition times, recess/lunch, etc.).
- Outline how prevention and exposure control measures are being implemented in the school to ensure student and staff safety.
- Discuss measures for gatherings and events; provide opportunities for staff and students to put forward alternatives to continue to support events in a different format if needed (e.g., virtual events).
- Discuss preparation for potential transitions (e.g. regional public health order).
- Review school emergency and evacuation procedures (e.g., fire drill) considering relevant guidelines.

- Outline individual responsibilities (e.g., daily health check, stay home if sick, etc.) and remind everyone to do their part (e.g., practice diligent hand hygiene on a regular basis).
- Outline measures in place to support students and staff who are immune compromised.
- Implement strategies to ensure staff and students who cannot attend the orientation are made aware of communicable disease protocols.
- Provide enough time and space for staff, students and families to review the School Plan, ask questions, and provide input; provide contact information for any future questions that may arise.
- Describe the process to address concerns and suggestions regarding the School Plan (e.g., suggestions to support continuous improvement).
- Outline the process in place to assess and revise the School Plan on an ongoing basis as well as how staff, students, families, and First Nation leadership will be made aware of any changes in the School Plan.
- Communicate proactively and on an ongoing basis about the changes made to policies, practices, and procedures to ensure staff, students, families and First Nation leadership are informed in a timely manner.
- Provide a list of resources and links for more information (e.g., [BCCDC resources](#), [resources from the Government of Canada](#), guidelines developed by provincial associations, Ministry-developed [trauma-informed practice resources](#), resources such as [videos from the BC Health Emergency Services](#)), and [resources from FNEC and FNFA](#).

#### CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO STAFF

- Provide a detailed to overview to staff (administrators, teachers, support staff, school staff, itinerant staff, etc.) regarding what the first days of school will look like to welcome students back.
  - If appropriate, consider involving school staff representatives in the delivery of information pertaining to specific areas of expertise.
- Ensure orientation includes specific communicable disease protocols for itinerant staff and specialists (e.g., counsellors, education assistants, teachers teaching on call, teacher candidates), including protocols pertaining to site-based scheduling and access to the building.
- Include itinerant staff as well as on-call and auxiliary staff in orientation sessions.
- Implement strategies to ensure staff who work at multiple sites are made aware of communicable disease protocols in each of the sites.
- Share procedures and contact information in case of emergencies.
- Introduce members of any health and safety committee representatives (along with their contact information) and outline their role in helping maintain a healthy and safe workplace.
- Outline existing processes to address requests, concerns, or accommodations related to communicable disease prevention measures.