

### 1. What should I do to help keep my child safe at school?

You can help keep your child – and everyone else - safe at school by:

- Doing a daily health check for your child before school.
- Keeping your child home if they are sick.
- Helping your child know how to:
  - Manage their space from others
  - Clean their hands often
  - Wear a mask correctly
  - Follow the health and safety rules of their school.
- Following public health recommendations, like avoiding non-essential travel and avoiding socializing with people who live outside of your household.

### 2. Is my family at increased risk of getting COVID-19 if my child goes to school?

Schools are low-risk settings for getting COVID-19. This is because:

- There are effective health and safety plans in place. These include multiple layers of protection that work together to reduce risk, and
- Most people in the school are children, who are less likely than adults to have or spread COVID-19.

Most often, it is an adult who brings COVID-19 into a household.

Your family's risk for getting COVID-19 depends on many things, like where you live and the types of activities you do. The best way to protect your family from COVID-19 is to follow [public health recommendations](#) and Provincial Health Officer [Orders](#).

### 3. When should my child stay home from school?

Children should stay home from school when:

- they are sick.
  - Check your child for symptoms of illness everyday before school to make sure they don't go to school sick. This is called a daily health check.
  - Use the [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#) or [this resource](#) to do your child's daily health check.
- they are waiting for COVID-19 test results.
- they are required to [self-isolate](#).
  - Children are required to self-isolate if they have travelled outside of Canada OR they were identified by public health as a close contact of someone who recently tested positive for COVID-19.

#### 4. **Someone in my child's class was identified by public health as a close contact. Does my child need to self-isolate too?**

Public health identifies [close contacts](#) and asks them to self-isolate. If you do not receive a letter or phone call from public health asking for your child to self-isolate, they do not need to. They can continue to attend school.

#### 5. **I received a letter from public health about an exposure of COVID-19 at my child's school. What does it mean?**

**Exposure notifications** let you know when someone in your child's school attended when they might have been infectious with COVID-19.

Typically, school exposure notifications are provided after contact tracing is complete and after close contacts have been notified. Exposure notification letters may be sent by public health or by your school/school district, depending on the region. Exposure notifications are also posted on the regional health authority websites. If you have not been directly contacted by public health asking for your child to self-isolate, your child can continue to attend school.

In some regions, early exposure notification letters are sent before contact tracing has started. This is to let the school community know about the case, and that public health is doing contact tracing. Your child can continue to attend school while contact tracing is underway.

Regional health authorities include different types of information in their letters. Contact your child's school or 8-1-1 if you're not sure what your letter means.

#### 6. **Should my child wear a mask at school?**

Masks provide protection to the person wearing them and to those around them. Children over age 2 can safely wear masks.

If your child is in middle or secondary school, they should wear a mask on buses and indoors at school except when:

- sitting or standing at their seat or workstation in a classroom or learning space; or
- there is a barrier in place; or
- eating or drinking.

If your child is in elementary school, they don't have to wear a mask at school or on the bus. Talk to your child about if you'd like them to wear a mask, and where you'd like them to wear one.

Your child is welcome to wear a mask at school more often. Talk to your child about when you'd like them to wear a mask.

More information on masks is available [here](#).

### 7. Why are schools open?

Attending school in person is important for a student's education and well-being. Schools deliver many important services for many children.

Since Spring 2020, we've learned a lot about how COVID-19 spreads. From our experience in B.C. and around the world, we know that having schools open does not make COVID-19 spread farther or faster in our communities. The number of cases in schools reflect what is happening in our communities.

With health and safety plans in place with multiple layers of protection, schools are safe places to be. We all need to follow public health recommendations to keep the number of cases in our communities low. This is the most important thing for keeping our schools safe.

### 8. How do we know schools are safe?

Evidence from BC, Canada and internationally shows that when health and safety plans are in place, schools are low-risk for COVID-19 transmission.

We also know this based on our experience in BC since September. While there have been a number of [school exposures](#), school medical health officers have noted that most of these did not result in any transmission at school.

We all need to follow public health recommendations to keep the number of cases in our communities low. This is the most important thing for keeping our schools safe.

### 9. What should I do if someone in my child's class was sick or has been absent for a few days?

Your child should continue attending school. There are many reasons for a person to be absent from school. Most illnesses in B.C. are not COVID-19.

Public health will contact you directly by phone call or letter if your child was a close contact of somebody with COVID-19 and needs to self-isolate.

### 10. What should I do if someone in my child's class tested positive, but I haven't heard from public health yet?

If your child has no symptoms of illness, they should continue attending school.

If your child has symptoms of illness, use the [When to Get Tested](#) resource or the [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#) to know what to do next.

Parents and families sometimes hear about a member of their school community testing positive for COVID-19 before they are notified by public health. This is often because the person who tested positive has told people before public health has completed contact tracing.

Public health will always contact you directly by phone call or letter if your child is identified as a close contact of the person who tested positive.

**11. Should my child go to school if someone in my household tested positive?**

No. If someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19, everyone in the household will be asked to self-isolate.

More information is available [here](#).

Updated: February 4, 2021