

Squamish Waldorf School COVID-19 Policy & Protocols

1. Principles

This policy was developed following guidance in from the [Ministry of Education Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 settings](#), the [BC restart Plan for K-12 schools](#), and the [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Childcare settings](#).

with education partners articulated the following principles with respect to health and safety:

- Squamish Waldorf School (SWS) will adhere to the guidelines and directions from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and WorkSafeBC.
- Squamish Waldorf School will stay up to date and implement all additional health and safety requirements for schools to ensure consistency across the K-12 system as directed by the Ministry of Education. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure the update and implementation of all policies.
- Psychological safety measures and trauma-informed practice will be valued and implemented alongside physical health and safety measures.
- Effective communication with all community partners, parents, caregivers, students, board members and employees is an essential aspect of successfully implementing these guidelines.
- Squamish Waldorf School will work collaboratively with AWSNA- BC Waldorf subregion, WECAN, and its own faculty members to ensure that Waldorf principles of developmentally appropriate pedagogy guide the implementation of policies related to the COVID-19 response.

2. Objectives

As a part of ensuring continuity of learning and educational outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic, this policy is intended to support school employees, students, parents, caregivers, administrators and school community members to:

- Be informed about public health measures and feel safe in school.
- Understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining and promoting public health and school safety.

3. Requirements for Health & Safety

Requirements for school health and safety are organized into two main sections:

1. Foundational health and safety requirements.
2. Additional COVID-19 related requirements from authorities.

3.1 Foundational Health & Safety Requirements

There are several existing requirements for school health and safety, which are specified in the following.

LEGISLATION

The *School Act* sets the legal framework for public schools, sections 88 to 92 describe how health and other support services interact with schools. http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_06. The Medical Health Officer (MHO) under the Public Health Act may issue orders or recommendations relating to independent schools. A School Medical Officer can require a board or independent school authority to close a school if the School Medical Officer considers the health or safety of students is at risk. If a School Medical Officer believes that the health condition of a student or an employee of the board would endanger the health of other students or employees at a school, the School Medical Officer must report that to the board, who must then remove that person from the school.

Squamish Waldorf School Association (SWSA) has the authority to close a school on a required day of instruction if it believes the health or safety of students is endangered. If a teacher or principal suspects a student is suffering from a communicable disease that endangers others at the school, they must report this to Vancouver Coastal Health; and may exclude the student from school until a certificate is received from their doctor permitting them to attend. SWSA can also require staff who are suffering from a communicable disease to be suspended from work until they can provide a certificate from their doctor permitting them to return to work.

If a student is excluded from attending school due to health reasons, SWSA will continue to provide an educational program to the student. SWSA has a general authority to close a school if it believes the health or safety of students is endangered. SWSA will ensure confidentiality of student information and ensure privacy for students and their families and will also provide access to student information to persons providing health or social services to students.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Professional Standards for Educators sets out the principles that guide educators' professional practice. Standard 1 states that *"educators value and care for all students and act in their best interest"*.

OTHER LEGAL GUIDANCE

Schools and teachers are expected to take responsibility for their student's physical and mental safety and wellbeing. This general duty of "in loco parentis" or acting in the place of a careful and judicious parent, is found in the common law of court decisions and precedents.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LENS

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.

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 student need.

These principles and practices are already in place at Squamish Waldorf School. Additionally, the SWS Principal will ensure that an impact assessment is conducted for students, teachers, educators and other staff members as part of a trauma-informed transition back into classrooms. This can be done by surveys and 'check-ins,' and pedagogical activities such as artistic responses.

3.2 Additional COVID related requirements

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, several statutory authorities in B.C. have issued health and safety requirements from schools that must be followed. This policy will address ALL the requirements in these guidelines.

3.2-1 GUIDELINES FROM THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICER

The following requirements reflect first and foremost all guidelines from the PHO. The Ministry, in consultation with education partners, has added additional detail or context to some of the parameters below to provide clarity. PHO guidelines for the K-12 sector can be found here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES

1. Mass Gatherings

Following the Order of the PHO, Squamish Waldorf school will prohibit gatherings and events of people in excess of 50 people; however, this Order does not apply to regular school activities. As such, there can be more than 50 students and staff in a school at any given time if they are not all in one area and if they are actively engaged in physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. Large assemblies of staff and students will not be held.

2 .Case Finding, Contact Tracing and Outbreak Management

In order to support case finding and contact tracing, SWS will report any increased absenteeism or suspected cases to Vancouver Coastal Health in a timely manner. The Office Manager is responsible for notifying VCH of any suspected cases, and will inform the Principal that a report has been made. The Office Manager will consult with the Public Health Nurse if any questions around reporting arise. SWS will make available all student information requested by VCH in a timely manner, and will abide by all measures deemed necessary by the PHO in the case of a local outbreak to prevent further transmission of COVID-19 and keep others safe in the school.

3. Self-isolation and Quarantine

Should children, youth and staff have common-cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms they must stay home, be assessed by their health care provider and tested for COVID-19. When someone is symptomatic, they should self-isolate and follow directions provided by their health care provider. Self-isolation is also advised for those who are considered a close contact of a confirmed case and are waiting to see if they develop COVID-19 illness.

'Quarantine' is a term typically reserved for persons who return from travel outside the country are at risk of developing COVID-19.

If a person is found to be a confirmed case of COVID-19, public health staff will ensure there is robust contact tracing and management of any clusters or outbreaks. They will also ensure that children, staff, parents and caregivers have access to health care providers and that appropriate supports are in place.

ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES

1. Cleaning and Disinfection

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. SWS will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the [BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#) document.

This includes:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises should occur at least once a day. This service is currently contracted to Tara McKone of Freshly Clean, Squamish, BC.
- Frequently-touched shared surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day between 10 am and 12 pm and between 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm. (*e.g. door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, electronic devices, keyboards and toys*) The office manager will ensure that this occurs in common areas including entrances, hallways, bathrooms, the resource room, school main office and kitchen. Teachers are responsible to ensure that common touch surfaces are sanitized within their classrooms, and administrators will ensure that this occurs in their office spaces. Charts to log this activity will be posted in the main office and in each classroom and completed charts will be logged in a binder located in the central office.
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Use common, commercially-available detergents and disinfectant products and closely follow the instructions on the label.
- Limit items that are not easily cleaned (*e.g. fabric or soft items*).
- Empty garbage containers daily.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids (*e.g. runny nose, vomit, stool, urine*).
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
- Washrooms should be cleaned at least twice a day keeping in line with the high touch surface area protocols.
- SWS will provide paper hand towels.
- SWS will provide cleaning products and gloves for each room and near for common devices and materials used for the delivery of education (*e.g. photocopiers, supply rooms, etc.*)
- SWS will ensure that sanitizers and cleaning supplies always remain out of reach of small children and under the supervision of adults.

There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

1. Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact

Physical distancing (*e.g. maintaining a distance of 2 metres between two or more people*) is challenging in a K-12 school setting, particularly with younger students. As such, it is reasonable to establish different expectations for varying age levels and activities. For example, younger students will be supported to have minimized physical contact with one another, while older students and adults will be guided to maintain a safe physical distance whenever possible.

The following physical distancing strategies should be implemented where possible in the K-12 school setting:

(Note: This includes all related school activities including field trips, fundraising, etc.)

- Avoid close greetings (*e.g. hugs, handshakes*). Regularly remind students about keeping their "hands to yourself".
- The number of students in a space should not exceed the ability to maintain health and safety measures.
- Spread people out into different areas.

- Consider different classroom and learning environment configurations to allow distance between students and adults (e.g. different desk and table formations).

- Stagger pick-up and drop-off times by requiring students to enter and exit in different locations.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone between primary and upper grades.
- Take students outside more often.

- Organize learning activities outside including snack time, place-based learning and unstructured time.

- Take activities that involve movement, including those for physical health and education, outside.

- Reassure students, parents and caregivers that playgrounds are a safe environment, and encourage appropriate personal hygiene practices before, during, and after outdoor play.

- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff.

- For younger students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.

- For adolescent students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.

▪ Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and bathrooms. This will be done by installing visual cues for physical distancing, sending students to use the washrooms one at a time, and having administration monitor the upstairs hallway during transition times.

▪ Parents and caregivers and other non-staff adults entering the school will be minimized. They should also be reminded to practice diligent hand hygiene and maintain physical distance when they are in the school.

▪ Assemblies and other school-wide events should be held virtually to avoid large gatherings of people in one space.

2. Student Transportation

During the COVID-19 response Stages 2 – 5, SWS will not organize transportation via parent carpools. SWS will use self-transportation (walk or bike) for all off-site activities, use public transit or chartered busses, or require parents to transport their children directly. SWS recommends that parents do not transport or carpool with students outside their designated household bubbles.

SWS Additional Protocols

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- SWS will install physical distancing markers in all hallways, walkways outside of school entrances, stairs and ramps to provide visual cues for physical distancing.
- Signage will be placed at all school entrances to remind adults entering the building to maintain physical distance of 2 M
- Young students (ECE – Grade 3) will be guided to minimize physical contact by the adults in charge. Older students (Grades 4 and up) will be guided to minimize physical contact and observe social distancing wherever possible. Teachers will teach these concepts through various means appropriate to the age of the child including modelling, stories, visual cues, games and direct instruction.
- Classrooms will be set up to minimize density and create space between students wherever possible, including spacing students one desk or chair apart, and creating separate stations for different activities.
- Teachers of young children (ECE to Grade 3) will use their professional judgement to determine when close contact is warranted in the interest of the physical or emotional wellbeing of a child, balancing the transmission risk that closer contact brings.
- Grades students and non-ECE staff will not be allowed in the kitchen during school hours. Access to the school office is restricted to staff and students accompanied by an education assistant. Teachers will keep a sufficient supply of necessary stationery and first aid supplies in their classrooms to avoid unnecessary trips to the office. Grades students will be instructed to keep out of downstairs hallways.
- Students who are not able to avoid physical contact between others may be sent home after warnings and at the discretion of their teacher.
- School administration will monitor upstairs hallways during transitions to ensure physical distancing.
- Teachers will send students to the washrooms one at a time and instruct them to wait outside the door if there are more than two students present.

ENTERING AND EXITING THE SCHOOL

- Students will be directed to enter the school through separate doorways and go directly to their classrooms with their belongings. Kindergarten and Huckleberry Preschool will enter and exit through their main door. Sunflower Preschool will enter and exit through the main doorways, but pick-up and drop-off will occur at the entrance to the preschool yard. Grades 1 and 2/3 will use their rear fire exit, Grade 4/5 will enter through the main school entrance at a staggered time from the Huckleberry

Preschool, and Grade 6/7 will use the upstairs back hallway exit. Teachers and staff will use the same entrances and exits as the students or use the main entrance, practicing physical distancing.

- Hand sanitizer stations will be placed outside the school building.
- Administration will be on hand at drop-off times to direct students to their classrooms; at pick-up, administration will direct parents to leave with their children right away and not linger on school grounds.
- Grades teachers will be in their classrooms from 8:30 – 8:45 am on school days to supervise children entering the classroom and ensure hand hygiene is practiced.
- Preschool and Kindergarten teachers will be on site at 8:45 – 9:00 am to supervise children entering the playground and ensure hand hygiene is practiced and health assessments are made for preschool children.
- Student belongings will be taken directly into the classroom and stored apart from the belongings of other staff and students.
- Parents will not be allowed into the school building, except in cases of emergency, and are encouraged to communicate with the office by email or telephone and drop off any items outside.

MEALS AND SNACKS

- Preschool and Kindergarten snack will not be provided until further notice. Parents are asked to pack a snack for their children.
- Food is not to be shared amongst students. Student lunch kits and water bottles should be clearly labelled with the student's name.
- Cups and cutlery will not be provided for students. They must bring their own water bottles and utensils.
- Students will be asked to come to school with full water bottles to minimize trips to the washroom to fill them.

OTHER MEASURES

- Schools should not be used for community related events unless determined essential by the Board of directors.
- Employees and students should not be sharing personal items (*e.g. electronic devices, writing instruments, etc.*). Teachers will ensure that separate materials are kept for each student.
- Students are not permitted to use the office phone. The office manager can make calls for students as deemed necessary by teachers and staff.

PERSONAL MEASURES

1. Stay Home When Sick

- All students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19, OR travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days, OR were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate, including children of essential service workers who are ill.
 - Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school.
 - Staff must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the school.
 - School Administrators will provide guidance in faculty meetings, through emails and postings in staff rooms to ensure school staff are aware of their responsibility to assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease prior to entering the school.
 - School Administrators will require all families to complete a COVID-19 information and consent form which clearly communicates the responsibility of parents and caregivers to assess their children daily before sending them to school. This form will include clear guidelines and instructions for assessment and will also include the requirement of parents having someone on hand to pick up their child right away should they become sick at school.
 - Teachers will reinforce the responsibility of parents to assess their children daily by including it in their correspondence with parents.
 - School administration will be on hand at drop-off times to greet parents and audit compliance by asking if their children are feeling well.
 - Children who become sick at school will be sent immediately to the office to isolate, and their parents or caregivers will be contacted to arrange a pick-up.
 - PPE (masks and gloves) will be on hand for staff members to attend to sick children.
 - The area where sick children have been placed will be cleaned and sanitized following their leaving the area.
 - Staff and students who are ill, including children of essential service workers, should not be permitted to attend school (*Note: Students and employees should stay home until deemed healthy to return*).
 - Those unsure of if they, or a student, should self-isolate should be directed to use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#).
- *If concerned, they can be advised to contact 8-1-1, or the local public health unit to seek further input.*
- *They can also be advised to contact a family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory diseases.*

2. Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Both students and staff can pick up and spread germs easily, from objects, surfaces, food and people. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene. Parents, caregivers and staff can teach and reinforce these practices amongst students.

How to practice diligent hand hygiene:

- Wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19.
- If sinks are not available (*e.g., students and staff are outdoors*), use alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol.
- If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rub may not be effective at eliminating respiratory viruses. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty. Teachers will back biodegradable hand soap and extra water to use on hikes and picnics.
- To learn about how to perform hand hygiene, please refer to the [BCCDC's hand washing poster](#).

Strategies to ensure diligent hand hygiene:

- Hand hygiene stations will be set up at the school entrance, so everyone can perform hand hygiene when they enter and throughout the day (*e.g. placing alcohol-based hand rub dispensers at the front entrance; put up posters to promote the importance of regular hand washing*).
- Regularly remind staff and students about the importance of diligent hand hygiene.
- Incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule.
- Ensure hand washing supplies are well stocked at all times including soap, paper towels and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Staff should assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.

3. Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff 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, or unwashed utensils.

Cloth or homemade masks are not recommended, particularly for children. There is limited evidence outside of health care settings and only in uncontrolled situations where physical distancing between adults cannot be maintained for extended periods of time (*greater than 15 minutes with a person who has probable or lab confirmed COVID-19*). Wearing a mask is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect. Parents, caregivers and staff can teach and reinforce these practices amongst students.

4. Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves are not needed, beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions for the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work. They should only be used when all other controls fail (*e.g. only used when other control methods cannot reduce the risk to a low enough level*).

Managing students with complex behaviours, on a delegated care plan or experiencing a health emergency may require staff to be in close physical proximity with the student. No additional personal protective equipment is required (*for reducing COVID-19 transmission*) beyond precautions regularly taken or previously identified for the use with a specific student.

There is no evidence to support the use of medical grade, cloth or homemade masks in school settings at this time. Wearing a mask is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect.

More information about COVID-related mask use is available on the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#).

5. Supporting School Communities

The BC Centre for Disease Control is the source of information about COVID-19. Resources available there can be used to support learning and to respond to questions you may receive from members of your school community.

More information is available on the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#).

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

These guidelines may be amended to respond to an increased risk of transmission. If required, personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided to teachers through existing WorkSafe processes. As the law currently provides, teachers who are immune-compromised, have underlying conditions that put them at greater risk, recovering from or receiving cancer treatment, age 60 or older, will be accommodated.

Posters

- [COVID-19 prevention poster](#)
- [Physical distancing poster](#) (English)
- [Hand washing poster](#)
- [Be prepared infographic](#)
- [Do not enter if you are sick or required to self-isolate poster](#)

