

Houston Christian School Health and Safety Plan

Revised August 2020

Introduction

The health and safety of staff and students is of primary importance in our work at Houston Christian School. Houston Christian School's Restart Plan has been developed in accordance with WorkSafeBC's Education (K-12): Protocols for returning to operation (August 11, 2020); the Ministry of Education's Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent School Authorities (August 17, 2020); the Ministry of Health's and BC Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings (July 29, 2020).

It is required that all independent school authorities address all the requirements of the above documents in their Stage 2 Continuity of Learning (PDF) health and safety planning, and inform all community members of their roles and responsibilities in promoting and maintaining a safe and healthy school setting. This Health and Safety Plan provides detail or context to some of the parameters to provide clarity. Staff and parents/caregivers are encouraged to review all of the documents linked above.

Although this Health and Safety Plan has been primarily drafted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the key message of **"Give SPACE - CLEAN with Care"** and many of the measures outlined below, would apply for reducing transmission of any communicable disease in a K-12 school context. Some of these measures will, at first, require focus and attention but will, in time and with practice, fade to the background as routine. Finally, it is to be noted that all of these measures are secondary to promoting a strong immune system through healthy diet, regular exercise, and getting enough sleep.

Modifications of this HCS Safety Plan will be made as needed according to any forthcoming provincial and federal requirements as the school year unfolds.

Staff will be provided an orientation to any changes to the hazards and the protocols/procedures as they arise.

Understanding the Risk & Routes of Transmission for COVID-19

Two primary routes of transmission have been identified for COVID-19. These include contact transmission and droplet transmission. Fecal-oral transmission is a third suspected transmission route:

**** Contact Transmission ****

Direct contact involves skin-to-skin contact and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth. Indirect contact involves a worker touching a contaminated intermediate object or surface, and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth. It is uncertain how long the virus can live on surfaces but it may be hours to days. The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact the same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

**** Droplet Transmission ****

Droplets may be generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets travel a short distance through the air and can be deposited on surfaces or directly in the eyes, nose, or mouth. The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and

the number of people you come near. Health experts recommend keeping two meters (6 feet) between people wherever possible to mitigate this risk.

Fecal-Oral Route Transmission

Consider potential fecal-oral route transmission. Where possible, close toilet lids when flushing. Hand hygiene is especially important after using the bathroom.

Airborne Transmission

Currently, health experts believe that COVID-19 is not transmitted through airborne transmission.

Signs and Symptoms

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms (malaise, runny nose, fatigue, sore throat, nausea, diarrhea) to severe symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chest pain). The symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**. This list is not all inclusive. Consult with a medical provider for other symptoms.

Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for COVID-19

HCS will restrict access to the school for all individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19. Such individuals must stay home and be assessed by a health care professional to exclude COVID-19 and/or until symptoms resolve.

HCS will also restrict access to the school for all individuals who have travelled outside Canada. These individuals (and possibly direct family members) will be required to stay home and self-isolate in accordance with guidance from the BC Center for Disease Control.

HCS will also restrict access to the school for all individuals identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or an outbreak of COVID-19.

I. Give SPACE

Public health measures to reduce transmission of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, involve giving one another space by reducing contact intensity and minimizing the number of overall contacts. This means adjustments to the type (close/distant) and duration (brief/prolonged) of contact and the number of people permitted in a setting at one time.

Specifically, within the K-12 setting of Houston Christian School, this means:

1. Staying home if you are sick.

- a. **Daily Self-Assessment for Staff**: Staff are required to perform daily self-assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to coming to work.
- b. The **essential need for caregivers to assess their children daily**, prior to sending them to school, will be clearly communicated to our school community frequently.
- c. A **Daily Health Check tool will be provided** to families and staff to facilitate this process. Individuals who are unsure of how to interpret symptoms, are encouraged to use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) or consult with their physician.
- d. Individuals will be permitted back on campus when the following conditions are met:
 - i. COVID-19 symptom-free OR

ii. Note from physician indicating COVID-19 free and symptom-free OR

iii. Covid-19 test comes back negative

2. Immediate isolation if symptoms occur on campus

- a. Should a student develop symptoms while present at school, the individual will be immediately placed in isolation. HCS's designated spot is in the isolated hallway between the main office and the Admin office.
- b. Physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, and hand hygiene protocols will be followed while awaiting pickup from caregivers.
- c. The individual will be encouraged to wear a provided mask (if s/he can tolerate it).
- d. HCS office staff will attend to the isolated person, maintaining a minimum 2 meter distance, and refrain from touching surfaces in the isolation area.
- e. Following departure of the symptomatic individual, the area will be cleaned and disinfected according to the necessary protocols.
- f. The above procedure will be used for staff who develop symptoms while present at school as well. However, provided the individual is able to drive and has transportation, s/he will depart the premises promptly, rather than utilize the isolation area.

Note: HCS has a "No-Touch" thermometer on site to assist in determining if a child's health complaints involve legitimate fever symptoms.

3. Site Entry Protocols

In an effort to keep the campus as hygienic as possible and to limit the number of overall contacts, site entry to the HCS campus will be limited to individuals who are required on the premises. Visiting the school will be strongly discouraged and will be prioritized to allow visitors who are supporting activities that are of benefit to the school community's learning and well-being.

- a. Visitors will confirm the requirements of a daily health check prior to entering the building.
- b. HCS office staff will keep a list of all visitors to the HCS campus (for contact tracing purposes).
- c. Designated site entry points will be signed with standard signage providing information and instruction to entrants that will help maximize facility hygiene and cleanliness and include signage on physical distancing and hand washing.
- d. Each entry point will have a hand sanitizing station and/or clear signage to the nearest hand washing station.
- e. HCS will operate with a "closed campus" policy. Students will not be permitted to leave campus during the school day on a regular basis. Heading to nearby convenience stores will not be permitted.
- f. Staff will generally be encouraged to remain on site for the duration of their school day.
- g. Uninvited/unexpected individuals who present to the site and do not require entry will be stopped from entering the building.

4. Cough/Sneeze Etiquette

All staff will be required to abide by the following cough/sneeze etiquette. Students will be trained, reminded, and prompted to follow this etiquette to the best of their ability. Droplets are generated when a person coughs or sneezes. These droplets may travel a short distance through the air and can be deposited on surfaces or directly in the eyes, nose, or mouth.

- a. Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm, not your hands.
- b. Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing.
- c. Use tissues to contain secretions and dispose of them promptly in waste container.
- d. Wash hands according to proper protocols immediately.

Note: In connection with this etiquette involving facial secretions, all individuals on campus will be reminded and encouraged to **develop the habit of not touching their faces** and refrain from things such as moistening fingertips with mouth in order to separate papers.

5. Cohorts (Learning Groups)

A cohort is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term. Cohorts reduce the number of in-person, close interactions a person has in school without requiring physical distancing to be consistently practiced.

- a. Elementary cohorts can be composed of up to 60 people. **HCS's elementary classes will be divided into two cohorts**, meeting this requirement.
- b. High school cohorts can be composed of up to 120 people. **Our projected enrollment currently indicates approximately 80 people in HCS's high school cohort.**
- c. The composition of the cohort will remain **consistent for all activities.**
- d. **Within the cohort, minimized physical contact will be encouraged, but a 2 meter physical distance does not need to be maintained.**
- e. Consistent seating arrangements will be used within cohorts as practical.
- f. **HCS will strive to minimize the number of adults who interact across cohorts** and those outside of a cohort will be required to practice physical distancing when doing so.

6. Other Physical Distancing Strategies

The current PHO advice regarding physical distancing in K-12 context is to **"minimize physical contact"** with younger children and **"physical distance where possible"** with adolescents. HCS intends to put this into practice across the campus in the following ways:

- a. Where needed, **floor marking, directional signage, and physical barriers** will be used to indicate where and how people can move through the building, line-up, and interact safely. (i.e. reception area, learning support rooms etc.).
- b. **Parents and caregivers should remain outside of the school to drop off and pick up their children.**
- c. Elementary students will be permitted to socialize with peers in different cohorts when outdoors if they can effectively minimize physical contact.

- d. The staff room at HCS will be divided into three cohort areas. Staff will be limited to sitting in their assigned areas.
- e. The staff kitchen will have an occupancy limit and traffic flow procedure.
- f. Break times will be staggered as necessary.
- g. Staff will be encouraged to store and consume food in their rooms, rather than in the staffroom, as much as is feasible.
- h. Students will be engaged in learning fun community-building ways to greet one another without physical contact (i.e. virtual hugs or distanced high-fives).
- i. Face shields will be available for staff upon request where educational practice will be enhanced by this safety choice (i.e. teaching French across a cohort or teaching Art to young children).

7. Mask Usage

Masks are an appropriate barrier to help stop cough or sneeze droplets from spreading. If available, HCS will maintain a supply of masks for individuals requesting one.

- a. **The use of masks at HCS will follow the direction of the Provincial Health Officer.**
- b. Non-medical masks are required to be used in situations where a person cannot maintain physical distance and is in close proximity to a person outside of their learning group or household.
- c. Students in the high school are required to wear non-medical masks anytime they are outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained. Exceptions will be made for students who cannot wear masks for medical reasons.
- d. Staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) anytime they are outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g., itinerant teachers/specialists interacting with multiple learning groups). Staff can also wear a mask, a face covering or a face shield within their classroom or learning group if that is their personal preference

II. CLEAN with Care

Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and surfaces will help prevent the transmission of viruses. **Cleaning and disinfecting processes, as laid out by WorkSafeBC, the BC CDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings, and the PHO, will be strictly adhered to at HCS, in order to mitigate the risk of surface transmission of COVID-19.**

Cleaning is the physical removal of visible soiling (e.g., dust, soil, blood, mucus). Cleaning removes, rather than kills, viruses and bacteria. It is done with water, detergents, and steady friction from cleaning cloth. *Cleaning for COVID-19 virus is the same as for other common viruses.* In general, cleaning should be done whenever surfaces are visibly soiled.

Disinfection is the killing of viruses and bacteria. A disinfectant is only applied to objects, never on the human body. It is recommended that high-touch surfaces be disinfected twice a day in order to mitigate the risk of contacting COVID-19.

Houston Christian School has a Cleaning Team that will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting the site. The cleaning team is managed by Admin Team member, Wendall Ewald. The Cleaning Team is comprised of Bill Brienens and Madelene Brienens. As available, cleaning material will be provided to individual site staff, but

supply may not be available to provide each staff with his or her own cleaning material. Site staff will not be discouraged from bringing in their own cleaning material to clean their personal workstation.

Specifically, within the K-12 setting of Houston Christian School, this means:

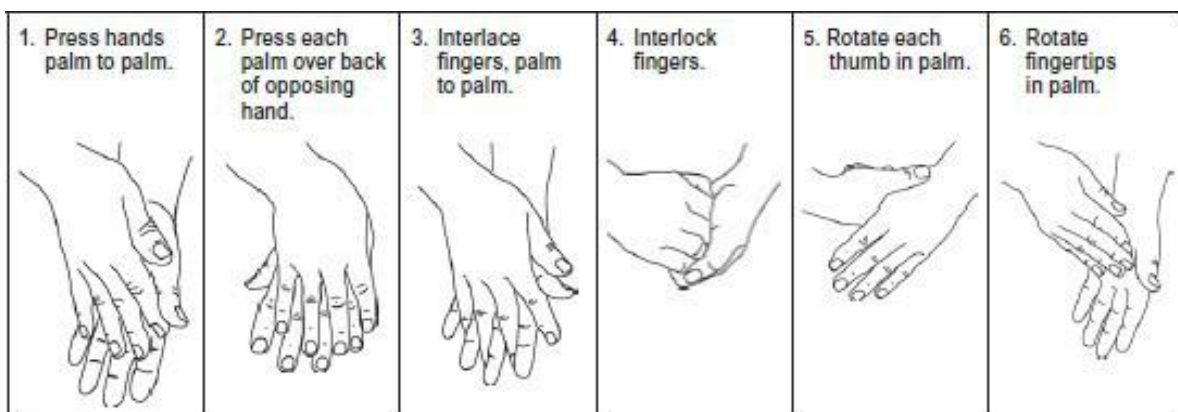
1. Regular cleaning and disinfecting will occur

- a. Professional, general cleaning and disinfecting of the full campus, by the Cleaning Team, will occur once a day.
- b. Targeted cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces and high traffic areas will occur a second time (midday), by the Cleaning Team. This includes but is not limited to door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, desks, and tables etc.
- c. If a room will be used by multiple cohorts in a given day, general cleaning and disinfecting will occur between sessions.
- d. Staff-initiated classroom cleaning and disinfecting will occur as needed.

2. Stringent hand hygiene protocols to be followed

Hand washing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk of infection. Proper hand washing helps prevent the transfer of infectious material from the hands to other parts of the body, particularly the eyes, nose, and mouth or to other surfaces that are touched. Staff will train, model, and assist students as needed and give reminders regularly.

- a. Hand cleansing will be required prior to or upon immediate entry to the building by all individuals.
- b. Hand washing will be required at all significant transitions in the school day. This includes but is not limited to: the start/end of day; between activities; immediately after sneezing, coughing or using a tissue; immediately after using the toilet; before and after snacks; following outdoor activities or play; and whenever hands are visibly soiled.
- c. Rigorous hand washing with soap and water will be taught and monitored for younger students. A minimum of 20 seconds is required. Hand-sanitizing will be used during some transitions. Visuals will be posted in all washrooms. Approved alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be made available in every classroom and provided to every individual upon arrival and departure at school daily.



- d. Students will be reminded and required to keep their hands to themselves as much as possible.
- e. Students will be taught and reminded frequently not to touch their faces.

3. Removing of or limited use of items not easily cleaned.

- a. Classroom materials (soft toys, etc.) and furniture that are not easily cleaned and/or disinfected will be removed from classrooms or made unavailable to students.
- b. Exceptions may be made for students with diverse abilities/disabilities; in these situations, use will be limited to one individual.

4. Limiting sharing of materials and technology.

- a. Students will be discouraged from sharing school supplies (pencils, calculators, etc.).
- b. All shared technology will be cleaned and disinfected prior to and after use.
- c. Manipulatives and laminated materials will be cleaned and disinfected after use (or put out of reach until a possible time to do so).

5. Sharing of food and drink will not be permitted.

- a. The sharing of food for occasions such as birthdays will not be permitted.
- b. Although the mouthpieces of water fountains have not been shown to be a major source of virus transmission, the use of individual water bottles that are filled at home will be strongly encouraged.

III. OTHER Administrative Guidelines

- a. As much as is educationally feasible, doors to learning spaces will be kept open to allow for air exchange.
- b. Learning space windows will be kept open (reasonable weather permitting) to allow for air exchange.
- c. Learning and movement breaks will take place outdoors when possible.
- d. HCS students who ride the public school buses will follow the procedures and protocols outlined by School District 54.
- e. HCS will notify our public health office to report increased absenteeism due to sickness.
- f. Extracurricular activities may occur if physical distance can be maintained between members of different cohorts and reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same cohort.
- g. Athletics offerings will be determined by BC School Sports recommendations and requirements.
- h. Interschool events, such as tournaments, will not occur at this time.