



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

Information for Students, Families and Staff

HIGHROAD ACADEMY

46641 Chilliwack Central Road, Chilliwack, BC V2P 1K3

www.highroadacademy.com

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Reviewed and adopted in alignment with the Ministry of Education and Child Care /
BC Centre for Disease Control Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings

Introduction

This Communicable Disease Prevention Plan (the Plan) sets out the measures Highroad Academy has in place to reduce the risk of transmission of communicable diseases, including COVID-19, influenza, and other respiratory or gastrointestinal illnesses, within our school community. The Plan is based on the Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings (BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, September 2023) and the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) / Ministry of Health Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools.

As a K-12 independent school in Chilliwack, BC, Highroad Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and caring learning environment for students, families, and staff, while supporting the spiritual, emotional, and academic wellbeing of our school community. Highroad Academy will review and update this Plan annually, when provincial guidance changes, or as circumstances require.

Section 1: Prevention Management

Key Principles

- Communicable disease prevention measures are aligned with public health guidance to support student and staff wellness.
- Highroad Academy applies an inclusive, trauma-informed lens with a focus on mental health and wellness.
- Supports are focused to address unique student and staff needs, recognizing that communicable diseases affect individuals and families differently.
- Highroad Academy engages and collaborates with parents/caregivers, staff, and community partners (including City Life Church) to develop local solutions when needed.
- As required by WorkSafeBC, Highroad Academy ensures the health of its workers by taking steps to reduce their risk from communicable disease.
- The Provincial Health Officer or the Fraser Health Medical Health Officer may issue temporary recommendations or orders for additional prevention measures during times of increased communicable disease risk.

Trauma-Informed Practice

Highroad Academy recognizes that some students and staff may have experienced trauma, including the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. Staff are encouraged to provide inclusive, compassionate learning environments; support healthy coping strategies and independence; and remain attentive to changes in student behaviour (e.g., fear, hyperactivity, withdrawal, or other trauma-related responses), referring to the erase (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) resources as needed.

Section 2: Communicable Disease Prevention Guidance

Environmental Practices

- **Cleaning and Disinfection:** Frequently touched surfaces (door handles, light switches, railings, shared equipment, keyboards) are cleaned and disinfected at least once every 24 hours and whenever visibly dirty, using common commercially available cleaning and disinfecting products. Bodily fluids are cleaned promptly using disposable gloves and proper hand hygiene before and after.
- **Ventilation:** HVAC systems are maintained and operated per OHS Regulation standards. Where possible, filters are upgraded (e.g., MERV 13), air exchanges are increased, and windows are opened when weather permits without impacting system function.
- **Hand Hygiene:** Hand-washing stations and alcohol-based hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol) are available and well-stocked throughout the school. Students and staff are encouraged to wash hands upon arrival, before eating, after using the washroom, and after coughing or sneezing.
- **Respiratory Etiquette:** Staff and students are encouraged to cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue, dispose of tissues immediately, avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands, and avoid sharing food, drinks, or unwashed utensils.

Administrative Practices

- **Health Awareness:** Parents/caregivers and staff are asked to complete a daily health check and to keep students or themselves home if experiencing symptoms of illness. Highroad Academy does not monitor students or staff for symptoms but relies on families and staff to self-assess.
- **What to Do When Sick at School:** A student or staff member who becomes ill at school will be separated from others in a designated space, supervised as needed, and sent home as soon as possible. Surfaces and equipment used by the ill person will be cleaned and disinfected before further use. Individuals may return once symptoms have improved and they are able to participate fully in regular activities.
- **Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities:** Staff and service providers working closely with students who have medical complexity, immune suppression, or diverse abilities will follow the student's individual care plan and routine infection control practices, in consultation with families and health care providers.
- **Space Arrangement & Transportation:** Classrooms and learning spaces are configured to best meet learner needs. School buses follow normal seating and boarding practices, cleaned and disinfected consistent with school-wide practices.

- **Visitors, Gatherings & Events:** Highroad Academy follows normal practices for welcoming visitors, volunteers, and community groups, and for school gatherings, assemblies, and extracurricular events, in line with this Plan.
- **Field Trips & Off-Site Programs:** Staff will follow the more stringent communicable disease prevention measures between this Plan and any host workplace, facility, or field trip venue.

Curriculum, Programs & Activities

- **Kindergarten & Preschool Program:** Kindergarten and preschool classes may continue to use frequently touched items such as toys, manipulatives, carpets, and rugs for circle time and play-based learning. Items that cannot be easily cleaned (e.g., fabrics, sand, foam, playdough) may still be used, as public health does not consider these a significant transmission risk; educators will supervise and support younger students with hand hygiene throughout the day, including before and after shared-material play and transitions between indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- **Music, Physical & Health Education (PHE) and Sports:** Students are encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after using shared equipment (e.g., balls, mats, weights, instruments). Equipment that touches the mouth — such as instrument mouthpieces, reeds, harmonicas, mouthguards, and water bottles — is not shared unless it is cleaned and disinfected between users. Shared gym and sports equipment is wiped down between class groups, and students are encouraged to bring their own labelled water bottle rather than sharing. Extracurricular sports practices, games, and tournaments (home and away) may proceed under normal scheduling.
- **Food & Culinary, Theatre, Film & Dance Programs:** Programs involving shared props, costumes, instruments, or kitchen equipment follow the same cleaning, disinfection, and hand hygiene practices as other shared-equipment activities, in addition to standard food safety requirements (see Food Safety, below) for culinary programs.
- **School Library & Learning Commons:** Regular book browsing, sign-out, and circulation processes continue as per routine practice; no additional quarantine or disinfection of books and print materials is required.
- **Trades Training & Work Experience Programs:** Students in individual work-experience or trades-training placements follow the communicable disease prevention plan of the host workplace; where a class or group attends together, the more stringent measures between Highroad Academy's Plan and the host site's plan apply.

Personal Practices

- **Masks and Face Coverings:** Wearing a mask is a personal choice for students, staff, and visitors. Individual choices are respected, and non-medical masks are kept on hand at the school office for anyone who would like one.
- **Personal Space:** Students and staff are encouraged to be mindful and respectful of others' personal space and comfort levels.
- **Food Safety:** Highroad Academy follows FOODSAFE and Food Premises Regulation requirements where applicable. Sharing of food, drinks, and items that touch the mouth is discouraged; shared items are cleaned and disinfected between uses.

Section 3: Managing Communicable Disease Activity at School

Most communicable diseases are managed by the individual/family through routine measures such as staying home until well enough to participate in regular activities. HealthLink BC (8-1-1) and the BCCDC Guide to Common Childhood Diseases are available resources for families.

- **Communications & Privacy:** Fraser Health's Medical Health Officer leads decisions on if, when, and how communicable disease activity is communicated to the school community. Highroad Academy exercises caution and protects personal privacy in all communications, and will not notify families of an individual's illness unless directed by public health.
- **Functional Closure:** A temporary closure due to insufficient staff to safely operate the school. Administration will notify the Fraser Health Medical Health Officer and the Ministry of Education and Child Care if a functional closure is being considered or implemented.
- **Public Health Closure:** A temporary closure ordered directly by a Medical Health Officer to prevent excessive transmission of a communicable disease. Highroad Academy will follow all such orders and communicate accordingly.

Section 4: Key Contacts, Resources & Plan Review

- Fraser Health Medical Health Officer (general inquiries): 604-918-7532
- HealthLink BC: 8-1-1 | BC COVID-19 / Communicable Disease Self-Assessment Tool: bc.thrive.health
- BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC): www.bccdc.ca
- WorkSafeBC – Communicable Disease Prevention: www.worksafebc.com
- Ministry of Education and Child Care: erase@gov.bc.ca
- Highroad Academy Administration Office: 604-792-4680 | info@highroadacademy.com