

Office of the Superintendent

Shelley Green - Superintendent

February 26, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Enhanced Safety Measures for K-12 schools

We have been working with our educational partners and schools to update our Health and Safety Plan to reflect the Provincial guidelines that were announced by the Ministry of Education on February 4, 2021. We are pleased to inform you that our Exposure Control Plan has been updated and adheres to all the enhanced safety measures.

I have attached the updated Exposure Control Plan for you to review. It is also readily available on our District website: www.sd61.bc.ca/covid-19/

Student and staff safety is always paramount. These enhanced measures are to assure students, staff and families that our schools continue to be safe spaces.

We know that schools are the best place for students to learn; moreover, they support children's social and emotional well-being. It is imperative that we all continue to do our part in keeping our schools safe. That said, we would like to remind families of the importance of daily health checks.

If your child is not feeling well and exhibits key symptoms of illness, please keep them at home. To identify key symptoms of illness, please refer to our Daily Health Checklist: www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2021/01/GVSD61_DailyHealthChecklist_20210115_parents.pdf

Also note, the Province has launched a daily health check app for families. To review: www.k12dailycheck.gov.bc.ca/healthcheck?execution=e2s1

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our families for their confidence in our School District. We are very grateful for the support of our parent/guardian community and your efforts in helping us keep our schools open. Our families have been incredibly supportive and I know our schools' administration, staff and teachers are greatly appreciative of your positive reception.

Spring break is just around the corner and although it will not be a year where we can travel, staying close to home will allow time for all of us to rest and relax.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

If you have any questions regarding the new enhanced measures, please connect with your school principal. We have also included additional resources below.

Thank you,



Shelley Green
Superintendent of Schools

For more Information:

The BC Centre for Disease Control has a new website with information and resources about health and safety measures in K-12 schools, student and staff safety, and what happens when there is a COVID-19 case in school: www.bccdc.ca/schools

Students and families can find up-to-date information about K-12 schools at:
<https://www.gov.bc.ca/safeschools>

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

One *Learning* Community



COVID-19

Exposure Control Plan

SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

February 26, 2021

COVID-19

Exposure Control Plan

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Introduction

All school staff have a shared responsibility in protecting themselves and students from the spread of COVID-19. We know that school closures have significant negative mental health and socioeconomic impacts on vulnerable students. We need to be vigilant in practicing prevention measures and mitigation strategies for our children that are balanced with the risks in our schools.

All employees are expected to read, know and organize their work in accordance with the Exposure Control Plan and BC Centre for Disease Control COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Settings. The Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings has been developed by the Ministry of Education to compliment the BCCDC and WorkSafeBC guidance and provides more details specific to school settings and applications of the health and safety guidelines to curriculum, programs and other educational activities.

NEW

Additional resources: **Worksafe Preventing Exposure to COVID-19 in the Workplace**
BCCDC COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidance for K-12 Settings
Ministry of Education COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings



COVID-19 Preventative Measures

1. **STAY HOME WHEN SICK** - All students, staff, and school visitors must complete the daily health check.
2. **HAND HYGIENE** - Everyone should clean their hands more often! Thorough hand washing with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness.
3. **RESPIRATORY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE** - Cover your coughs. Do not touch your face.
4. **PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MINIMIZING PHYSICAL CONTACT** - No sharing of food, drinks, or personal items. Spread students and staff out to different areas when possible. Take students outside more often. Stagger break and transition times. Incorporate individual activities. Remind students to keep their hands to themselves.
5. **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION** - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice every 24 hours (once during the school day). General cleaning of the school should occur at least once a day.
6. **NON-MEDICAL MASKS** can provide an additional layer of protection when more effective measures are not feasible.

NEW

Stay Home When Sick

- Parents and caregivers **must perform the Daily Health Check** and follow the directions as to when to stay home. You can find the **daily health checklist here**.
 - » **If a child has any key symptoms of illness, they must not go to school.**
- **Active Daily Health Checks for Employees:** The Provincial Health Officer now requires that daily health check processes be “active” in that staff must confirm with their administrator that they have reviewed the complete list of entry requirements and that none of the prohibited criteria apply to them.
 - » Schools can use a number of methods to confirm staff have completed a daily health check including in written, verbal, or online format.

You can find the **daily health checklist here**.

Please note that active daily health checks requirements are for staff only and do not apply to students.

What to Do If Symptoms Present:

SYMPTOMS	WHAT TO DO
- Fever (above 38°C) - Chills - Cough - Loss of sense of smell or taste - Difficulty breathing	1 or more of these symptoms: Get tested and stay home.
- Sore throat - Loss of appetite - Headache - Body aches - Extreme fatigue or tiredness - Nausea or vomiting - Diarrhea	If you have 1 symptom: Stay home until you feel better. 2 or more of these symptoms: Stay home and wait 24 hours to see if you feel better. Get tested if not better after 24 hours.
If you are a close contact* of someone who has COVID-19 and have any of the symptoms listed above: Get tested and stay home.	

* You will be notified by Island Health if you are a close contact. For more information on close contacts, go to: www.bccdc.ca/covid19closecontacts

- The following students, staff or other persons must stay home and self-isolate:
 - » A person confirmed by public health as a case of COVID-19; or
 - » A person confirmed by public health as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak of COVID-19; or
 - » A person who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days
- If a staff member is concerned they do not have adequate sick leave available for the absence recommended by their health care provider and does not have a short term disability plan (SID), they should contact their supervisor for approval to work from home or additional paid sick leave.
- If a staff member has been identified as a close contact by Island Health and been directed to self isolate, they should contact their supervisor about paid self-isolation leave.

Entering / Leaving the Building

- Maintain safe social distancing guidelines of six feet/two metres between people when entering and leaving the building. **Do not enter or leave the building in groups.**
- Each school will identify the entrances and exits to be used by students and staff.
- Wash your hands after you enter the building and disinfect your workspace as needed.

School Hours / Access

- Only use the designated entrances and exits.
- Schools will be open to staff 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. (M-F), and to teaching staff only on Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Rentals for community events will be restricted and require appropriate approvals.
- Parents and guardians will be encouraged to use phone or email to meet with staff or make an appointment.
- School volunteers will be limited to essential educational support programs such as school meals.
- The school will keep a log of all visitors, that includes contact information and confirmation of daily health check.
- The school will keep a log of all visitors, including staff that are not assigned to work in the school. This includes Itinerants, Spareboard, TIOC's, and Facilities staff.

Hand Hygiene

When Staff and Students Should Perform Hand Hygiene:

- When they arrive at school.
- Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch, outdoor learning activities, using playground equipment).
- Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student's desk or locker).
- Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple cohorts (e.g. the gym, music room, science lab, etc.).
- After using the toilet.
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Additional Staff Hand Hygiene:

- After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood).
- After cleaning tasks.
- After removing gloves.
- After handling garbage

BC Centre For Disease Control:
<http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

How to Hand Wash



Wash hands with warm (not hot or cold) running water



Apply liquid or foam soap



Lather soap, covering all surfaces of hands, for 20-30 seconds



Rinse thoroughly under running water



Pat hands dry thoroughly with paper towel



Use paper towel to turn off tap

Cleaning

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises at least **once every 24 hours**.
 - » This includes items that only a single student uses, like an individual desk or locker.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently-touched surfaces at least **twice every 24 hours**.
 - » These include door knobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, toilet handles, tables, desks and chairs used by multiple students.
 - » Shared equipment used by students including computer keyboards and tablets, manipulatives, toys, sports equipment and equipment used in shops, home economics rooms and science labs.
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Administrators will work with facilities staff to coordinate student transitions with cleaning schedules.
- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g. children's books or magazines) and items with plastic covers (e.g. DVDs) can be contaminated if handled by a person with COVID-19; however, the risk is low. There is no need for these items to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any period of time, or for hand hygiene to be practiced before or after use.
- Limit frequently touched items that are not easily cleaned to those that support learning, health and development.

NEW

NEW

Daily Sanitizing Routines

- Staff and students to wash hands upon arrival at school.
- Disinfect your work area as needed.
- If you must meet in an alternate space (as identified by your administration), disinfect the used surfaces, furniture, equipment etc. after the meeting.
- Disinfect all shared surfaces, furniture, equipment etc. when finished.
- Staff and students should not share food, drinks, or other personal items (e.g. devices, writing implements, etc.).

Physical Distancing Among Adults

- Follow safe social distancing guidelines by maintaining six feet or two metres distance between adults.
- Work in your classroom, office, or workspace as much as possible.
- If you need to talk to staff, make sure you **stay six feet or two metres away** or use your phone, email or Zoom to contact them.
- Ensure that you are in a space that allows for the six feet/two metre distance among adults.

Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact with Students and Among Students

NEW

School Gatherings and Events

School gatherings are events that bring staff and students together outside of regular learning activities. School gatherings should occur within the cohort, and occur infrequently.

- Schools should seek virtual alternatives wherever possible when a group is gathered, including for assemblies, extracurricular practices, and other activities.
 - » If a virtual alternative is not possible, the size of the gatherings should be minimized as much as possible.
 - » Limit attendees from outside of the cohort to the minimum number necessary (e.g. school staff, visitors etc.) to meet its purpose.
- Examinations or assessments are not considered school gatherings. They should be implemented in accordance with the guidance for within-cohort and multi-cohort learning in this document.
- Gatherings or events at a school, including social gatherings of students and/or staff, must comply with the PHO Order for Gatherings and Events. This includes events like student dances, music, theatrical or dance performances, parties, services, or other occasions where large groups of people may gather and health and safety guidelines may be difficult to implement.

Learning Groups

- Staff and students will be organized into learning groups to reduce the number of in-person, close interactions a person has in school without requiring physical distancing to consistently be practiced.
 - » In **elementary and middle schools**, a cohort can be composed of up to **60** people per term.
 - » In **secondary schools**, a cohort can be composed of up to **120** people per term.
- The learning groups will remain consistent for all activities in the school including staggered drop off and pick up times, recess, lunch and transitions within the schools.
- Within cohorts, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions, and spreading out as much as possible within the space available.
- Within the learning group, consistent seating arrangements, limiting shared learning resources, and outdoor learning and physical health activities are encouraged.
- Students will be reminded to keep their hands to themselves, and avoid hugs and handshakes.
- Administrators will keep up to date lists of all students and staff in the learning groups for public health contact tracing.
- The composition of learning groups may be changed at the start of a new quarter, semester or term in the school year. Outside of these times, composition will be changed as minimally as possible, except where required to accommodate learning, operational or student health and safety considerations.

NEW

Student Activities Outside Learning Groups

- Student breaks and transitions will be staggered to minimize interactions between learning groups.
- Administrators will manage the flow of people in common areas to minimize crowding and clearly mark hallways and other common areas to reduce contact between students.
- Students must maintain physical distancing with students and staff outside the learning group and students socializing with peers outside the learning group are encouraged to do so outdoors.

Multi-Cohort Learning

- Multiple groups of students from different cohorts can be in the same learning space at the same time if physical distancing can be strictly practiced between people from different cohorts, and there is adequate space available to prevent crowding of those from within the same cohort.

Staff Interacting with Multiple Learning Groups

- Administrators will work with school staff to set schedules that minimize the number of staff that interact with a learning group that they are not a part of as much as practical.
- School staff interacting with multiple learning groups will practice two-metre physical distancing and mask/face shield wearing. Plexiglass barriers may be used where practical.
- School staff interacting with multiple learning groups will keep a daily log of contacts with learning groups and individual students.
- These procedures apply to: Administrators, prep/exploratory teachers, non-enrolling teachers, teachers with assignments in more than one school, education assistants, custodians, office support staff, itinerant specialist educators TTOC's and Spareboard education assistants and clerical staff. (Additional procedures for itinerant specialist educators, TTOC's and Spareboard education assistants can be found on the [District's website](#)).

NEW

Music Education

- Students within the same cohort should be spaced as far apart as possible. In middle and secondary schools, masks should be worn when singing.
- Music education should occur in line with guidance developed by the British Columbia Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia, available [here](#).

NEW

Physical Education

- People should be spread out as far as possible during physical activity. Activities should be adapted wherever possible to reduce physical contact. There should be no activities that include prolonged physical contact (i.e. physical contact beyond a brief moment) or crowding. For example, activities like tag or touch football are lower-risk, whereas activities like wrestling or partner dancing should be avoided.
- Physical education and extracurricular exercise and sport activities should occur outside whenever possible.
- High intensity exercise activities are those that result in significantly increased respiration rates. In middle and secondary schools:
 - » If indoors and the activity is stationary, have students spaced 2 metres apart. If the activity involves movement, ensure there is ample space available to reduce the likelihood of physical contact beyond a brief moment.
 - » Move activities outside or pursue a low-intensity activity if this isn't possible.
- Masks should be worn indoors by middle and secondary students during low-intensity indoor activities where physical distancing cannot be consistently practiced. Wearing masks during high intensity exercise activities or outdoors is based on personal choice, but cannot be in place of the other measures detailed in this section.
- Masks should be worn by staff during physical education when they are unable to practice physical distancing.
- Shared equipment can be used; it should be cleaned according to the Cleaning and Disinfection section of this guidance.

NEW

Extracurricular Activities

- School-based extracurricular activities including sports, arts or special interest clubs can occur if they can be implemented in line with the guidance for within- and outside-of-cohort interactions noted in this document.

NEW

Additional Resources

- For more information to support curriculum, program and activities see pp 33-44 of the [Ministry of Education COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) which can be found on the [District's website](#).

Students with Disabilities and Diverse Abilities

- Staff or other care providers providing education services to students with disabilities and diverse abilities who are part of the same cohort should continue with routine practices. No additional mitigation measures or PPE are required. Staff or other care providers working with students with disabilities and diverse abilities across cohorts should wear a non-medical mask if physical distance cannot be maintained. A face shield can be used in place of a non-medical mask when working with students where seeing facial expressions and/or lip movement is important and physical distance cannot be maintained.

Students with Medical Complexity, Immune Suppression and/or Receiving Delegated Care

- Managing students with medical complexities, immune suppression or receiving delegated care may require those providing health services (e.g. staff providing delegated care or other health-care providers) to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a medically complex or immune suppressed student for an extended period of time. In community-based clinical settings where there is low incidence and prevalence of COVID-19, additional PPE over and above that required for routine practices is not required.

What to Do If a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms At School

IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL

Staff must take the following steps:

1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in the designated area.
2. Ask the student to put on their mask. If the student does not have a mask they will be provided with a disposable mask or tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Used tissues will be disposed of as soon as possible and hand hygiene performed.
3. The office will contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.
4. Where possible, a 2-metre distance from the ill student. If not possible, staff supervising the student will wear a mask or face covering.
5. Staff must avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If staff do, practice diligent hand hygiene.
6. Once the student is picked up, all staff supervising the student must practice diligent hand hygiene.
7. The custodian must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas recently used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).

Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.

IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT WORK

Staff must notify the administrator and go home as soon as possible.

If unable to leave immediately:

1. Symptomatic staff must separate themselves into an area away from others, outside if practical
2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.
3. Use a mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up.
4. The custodian must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).



BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool

NEW

For information on Public Health case management; case finding and contact tracing; school exposures and exposure notifications, see pages 8 - 9 of the [BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools](#).

NEW

Non-Medical Masks

- K-12 staff and middle/secondary students are required to wear a mask **indoors** at school except when:
 - » Sitting or standing at their seat or workstation in a classroom or learning space,
 - » There is a barrier in place,
 - » Eating or drinking.
- K-12 staff and middle/secondary students should wear a mask on buses.
- Elementary students' mask use should be based on their personal or family/caregiver's choice.
- Masks do not prevent the spread of COVID-19 on their own. They should not be used in place of physical distancing and there must be no crowding, gathering or congregating of people, even if non-medical masks are worn.
- Masks can be safely worn by school-aged children.
- Students should not be required to wear a mask if they do not tolerate it (for health or behavioural reasons). Schools are encouraged to support student mask use through positive and inclusive approaches, and not punitive measures or enforcement activities that exclude students from fully participating in school or that could result in stigma.
- All visitors must wear a non-medical mask when they are inside the school.



Daily Communication Routines

- When you arrive at school, wash your hands and head straight to your classroom, office or work area.
- Check your email as your administrator may have sent out a plan for the day.
- Call or email your administrator with any questions throughout the day.
- Check your email regularly for updates.
- Staff who do not have individual computers will be assigned a computer to be used while in the building.

General Ventilation and Air Circulation

At this time, there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, is contributing to the spread of the virus. School districts are required to ensure that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort for workers.

In order to enhance school ventilation, schools should consider:

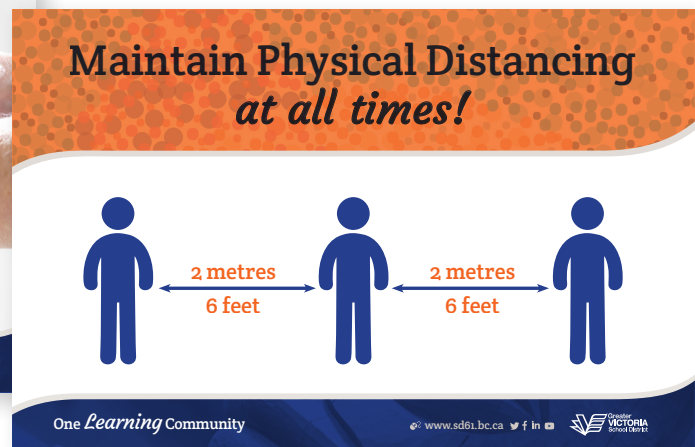
- moving activities outdoors when possible (for example, lunch, classes, physical activity) and consider moving classrooms outside when space and weather permit,
- ensuring that the ventilation system operates properly and maximize air exchange where possible, and
- opening windows when possible.

Note: Good indoor air ventilation alone cannot protect people from exposure to COVID-19; however, it may reduce the risk when used in addition to other preventive measures.

Photocopier or Supply Room

- If you need to use the photocopier wash your hands before you begin.
- When you are done, disinfect the photocopier.
- Disinfect any shared surfaces or equipment at the photocopy area/room such as staplers, hole punches, etc. that you used.
- Only one person at a time allowed at the photocopier, in the photocopy room and in the supply room (if your school has one).
- When you are finished at the photocopier or in the supply room, wash your hands again before you go back to your office or workspace.

NEW



Staffroom and Breaks

- **Wash your hands before you go into the staffroom.**
- **Maintain a distance of six feet/two metres between each other.**
- **Use visual cues (floor markers / posters) to promote physical distancing, and set occupancy limits.**

NEW

- Bring your own lunch. If you have to leave the school during a break, make sure you follow the same protocols that you did when you arrived.
- Bring a lunch/snack that does not require a lot of preparation (limit microwave use, surface use, utensil use, etc.).
- Disinfect the areas, surfaces, appliances, etc. that you use in the staffroom.
- When you are finished wash your hands again before you go back to your classroom, office or workspace.
- Do not share food or drinks.

Staff Washrooms

- Follow the plan for washroom use established by your administrator that includes washroom occupancy limits and which employees are assigned to which washroom.
- Make sure to wash your hands when you leave the washroom.
- Follow COVID-19 hand-washing guidelines as posted.

Other Shared or Specialty Spaces

- Administrators will develop protocols for use of other shared spaces within their individual buildings (libraries, gyms, shops, etc.) and post signage.
- Protocols for these spaces must be in line with district protocols.
- Disinfect used surfaces, appliances, furniture, equipment, etc. before and after use.

Staff Meetings

Schools should hold meetings, in-service and professional development activities and other gatherings virtually whenever possible. If meetings cannot be held virtually:

- » Staff should practice physical distancing for face-to-face meetings, whenever possible.
- » If physical distancing is not possible, and a barrier is not present, participants should wear masks. The number of participants and the length of the meeting should be minimized as much as possible.

WorkSafeBC Requirements

If a worker is injured as part of their workplace duties/tasks, follow the established procedures.

Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work. If you have reasonable cause to believe that performing a job or task puts you or someone else at risk, you must not perform the job or task. You must immediately notify your supervisor or employer, who will then take the appropriate steps to determine if the work is unsafe and remedy the situation.

For more information about the steps to follow: www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/rights-responsibilities/refusing-unsafe-work

If workers are expected to follow special safety measures such as deep cleaning, working alone, or working from home, they should know and follow any “Safe Work Procedures” for those tasks. Contact your supervisor/ principal/ vice-principal if you have any questions or concerns about work procedures.

Report all workplace injuries to your supervisor.

Our partners at Morneau Shepell are continuing to work with the District through LifeWorks. They have developed tools to help with:

- **Working from home when you are not used to it**
- **Coping with COVID-19**
- **Emotional well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic** (webinar)

Contact Information

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COVID-19 PROTOCOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Creating a safe and healthy environment for all of our students and staff is our top priority. We all have an important role to play and a responsibility to maintain to ensure safe working conditions in our learning community, for ourselves and for all others involved.

Employer (School District)

- Select, implement, and document risk assessments and appropriate site-specific control measures.
- Ensure that all resources and materials required to implement and maintain plan are reasonably made available as practical when required.
- Ensure that supervisors and workers are informed about the content of safety policies.
- Conduct a periodic review the effectiveness of the plan. This includes a review of the available control technologies to ensure that these are selected and used when practical.
- Maintain records of training and inspections.

Supervisors (Principals & Vice Principals)

- Ensure that workers are knowledgeable regarding the controls required to minimize their risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Direct work in a manner that eliminates or minimizes the risk to workers.
- Post or relay educational and informational material in an accessible area for workers to review.

Workers (Teachers, Education Assistants, Support Staff)

- Know the controls required to minimize their risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Participate in COVID-19 related training and instruction.
- Follow established work procedures and instructions as directed by the employer or supervisor.
- Report any unsafe conditions or acts to the supervisor.
- Know how and when to report exposure incidents.

Facilities Managers

- Maintaining an inventory of PPE for custodians, **cleaning and disinfectant products**, and well-maintained equipment used for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Providing adequate instruction to custodians on the hazards associated with cleaning work areas and on the safe work procedures specified in this exposure control plan.
- Directing the work in a manner that ensures the risk to custodians is minimized and adequately controlled.
- Revising the work schedule to ensure priority intensive cleaning of impacted work area surfaces and touch points.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

- Make recommendations to the employer for the improvement and implementation of the COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan.
- Identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe for workers, and advise on effective systems for responding to those situations
- Consult with workers and the employer on issues related to the COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan.
- Make recommendations to the employer on orientation/ training on COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan and to monitor their effectiveness.
- Complete a monthly COVID-19 **Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools Health & Safety Checklist** and submit to District Occupational Health and Safety Committee.