

Summary of COVID-19 Considerations for Curricular Activities

The content within this section reflects the [Ministry of Educations: COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools \(2021-2022\) Version 2](#) (updated August 13, 2021)

It is important to review your school board's policies and requirements as they may have established higher COVID-19 safety measures.

The use of the following are permitted within curricular activities (health and physical education):

- Facilities: gymnasiums, swimming pools, change rooms, fitness/weight rooms.
- Equipment: indoor physical education equipment (for example, balls, discs) and shared outdoor equipment (for example, gloves, bats, paddles).

Activities Definition

- **High-contact activities/sports** are defined as activities/sports where there is physical contact and/or close proximity required between individuals.
- **Low-contact activities/sports** are those that involve intermittent close proximity or limited, incidental physical contact between participants and allow for physical distancing most of the time.

Masking

- High-contact and low-contact activities are permitted indoors and outdoors as follows:
 - Outdoor:
 - Masking is not required when playing high or low contact activities/sports outdoors

- Indoor:

- Masking is encouraged for indoor activities/sports (low and high contact) where they can be worn safely based on the activity.
- Consider the following areas when determining if a mask can be “worn safely based on the activity”:
 - Potential physical risks (for example, getting caught on equipment, becoming a choking hazard, impairing vision, causing difficulty breathing).
 - Effectiveness of the mask (for example, change masks if they become wet or saturated with sweat).
- Windows should be opened when feasible to increase ventilation.

- To and from physical activity areas:

- Students in grades 1-12 are required to wear properly fitted non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways (for example, on the way to and from the activity area, inside change rooms) as well as on school vehicles (for example, travelling to and from off-site facilities).
- Additional masking requirements may be required based on input from your local public health unit.
- Students with sensory or breathing difficulties may be exempted by the school principal, guided by school board policies.

- Kindergarten students are encouraged but not required to wear non-medical or cloth masks in indoor spaces.

Screening and Visitors

Note: A visitor is any person coming to a school that is not an employee of school/board.

For outside activity providers, including instructors (for example, yoga and climbing instructors):

- Any visitor to the school (for example, outside activity providers) are required to self-screen and wear a medical mask (for example, surgical/procedural) while on school premises.
- A medical mask will be provided by the school if needed.
- School boards are expected to have a process in place to confirm the daily screening of all visitors prior to or upon their arrival at school.
- At the advice of the local public health unit school boards may be asked to restrict visitor access.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Note: Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are among the most important protective strategies.

For staff (for example, classroom, health and physical education teachers), outside activity providers (for example, yoga or climbing instructor) and students:

- Reinforce appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Hand hygiene should be conducted by anyone entering the school and incorporated into their daily schedule at regular intervals during the day (for example, before and after physical activity).
- Age-appropriate posters/signage should be placed around activity areas (for example, gymnasiums, fitness/weight rooms).
- Staff and students should have easy access to the supplies they need for appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Local public health units can provide additional guidance.

Distancing and Congregating

Note: As much distancing as possible between students, between students and staff, and between staff members should always be promoted.

For entering and exiting learning environment and providing instruction during class:

- Physical distancing measures are to be layered with other public health measures such as screening, hand hygiene, cohorting, enhanced cleaning and masking).
- Periods of student movement should be staggered, if possible, to limit student congregation (for example, transition to gymnasium, transition between periods).

School Arrival, Departure, and Signage

Note: Schools should develop arrival and departure procedures that support physical distancing, where possible.

For going to and from the activity area (for example, gymnasium, fitness/weight room, outdoors):

- Create designated routes for students to get to and from activity/sport.
- Provide visual cues or physical guides, such as tape on the floor or sidewalks and signs/posters on walls.
- Hand sanitizer should be available in school entrances and exits and in classrooms (including gymnasiums, fitness/weight rooms).

High Touch Surfaces

Note: High touch surfaces are surfaces that are touched by many individuals throughout the day (for example, benches, gymnastic mats).

- Focus should be on regular hand hygiene to reduce risk of infection due to high touch surfaces.
- When high touch surfaces are in use, cleaning plus disinfecting twice daily is suggested at a minimum, however more frequent cleaning may be necessary depending on the frequency of use and extent of soilage.
- Where possible, special considerations (for example, cleaning, distancing, limiting participation on equipment) should be taken for classrooms with fixed equipment (for example, fitness/weight rooms).

Shared Materials

Note: Shared materials are materials/equipment that are used between students (for example, basketballs, hula hoops, cricket bats).

- Focus should be on regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection related to shared materials, particularly when regular cleaning of shared objects is not feasible
- The use of shared materials is permitted and the risk associated with transmission with shared objects is low.

Shared Spaces (indoors)

For the use of change rooms:

- When different cohorts interact in shared indoor spaces masking and as much distancing as possible should be maintained between cohorts.
- The following strategies may be used: blocking off areas in change rooms, signage posted to remind students to maintain distance.

Student Transportation

For curricular activities (health and physical education (HPE)), outside activity providers, and outdoor education:

- **Capacity:**
 - School vehicles can operate at full capacity – vehicles for elementary students should reduce capacity where possible.
 - The seat directly behind the driver empty to maintain physical distancing between the driver and students.
 - Where school vehicles are able to operate at less than full capacity – students should be seated in a manner that maximizes physical distancing.
 - Windows should be open when feasible to increase ventilation.
 - **Note:** Distancing measures may not be applicable to other vehicles like vans and cars.

- **Masks:**

- Students in grades 1-12 are required on school vehicles.
- Students in kindergarten are encouraged to wear masks on student transportation.

- **Assigned Seats:**

- Students should be assigned seats and a record of the seating plan should be kept to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student or driver contracting COVID-19.
- Students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort should be seated together where possible.

Ventilation

Note: Learning environments included: gymnasiums, swimming pools, change rooms, weight rooms/fitness rooms

- School boards are required to ensure ventilation systems in all schools are inspected and in good working order prior to the start of the school year and continue inspections and maintenance throughout the school year.
- For schools or parts of schools without mechanical ventilation, school boards are expected to place stand-alone high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter units in all classrooms and learning environments (including gymnasiums, fitness/weight rooms). These units must be sized for the learning environment that is being used.
- School boards are encouraged to open windows where this augments ventilation for learning environments.

Hydration

Each student is encouraged to bring their own water bottle that is labelled, kept with them during the day and not shared.

Outdoor Education

School boards are encouraged to support outdoors education where possible.

Field Trips

Note: Day trips and Overnight stays are permitted.

For curricular activities (health and physical education (HPE)), outside activity providers, and outdoor education:

- For day and overnight trips, anyone entering the area must be screened upon approval
- The pick-up/drop-off of students should happen outside of the area or within a designated and isolated area.
- Schools should follow school board policies related to cohorting of students, spectators, transportation and supervision.
- Keeping daily accurate records of individuals entering the program setting (for example, name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, screening completion) is required to facilitate contact tracing.
- Staggering arrival and departure times is recommended to support cohorting and physical distancing measures.