

# School safety guidance for parents



## Why are schools restarting in-class instruction?

- ✓ *Schools provide many benefits, including: spaces for healthy eating, exercise and connecting with others.*
- ✓ *These benefits help the mental well-being of students.*
- ✓ *There are no extra risks in schools than in other public spaces.*
- ✓ *Children and youth are less likely than adults to catch or spread COVID-19.*
- ✓ *In-person classes give access to education for students, especially those who need extra support.*
- ✓ *Resuming in-class instruction gives access to childcare for parents who need to work.*

## What's the risk of COVID-19 for children and youth?

Very few children get sick from COVID-19. In BC, children and youth have had much lower rates of COVID-19 than adults. If children do get sick with COVID-19, they tend to have mild symptoms. Parents should focus on preventing the spread of COVID-19 between other adults.

Some children may have a higher chance of more serious symptoms if they get COVID-19. This includes children under 1 year of age, those with weakened immune systems and those with pre-existing lung conditions. Check with your healthcare provider if you have concerns.

You can learn more about COVID-19 at [bccdc.ca/covid19](https://bccdc.ca/covid19). You can check your symptoms using the self-assessment tool at [bc.thrive.health](https://bc.thrive.health).



# How can I protect my child(ren) and others from COVID-19?

## Stay home if you or your children are sick

- Check in with your children daily for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Teach them about common COVID-19 symptoms.
- Get tested if you or your child have symptoms.
- Keep your child connected on-line with friends and teachers if they are sick.



## Practice prevention before and after school

- Adults should keep 2 metres from others when dropping off and picking up.
- Drop off your child(ren) at sites assigned by staff. Don't go into the school if possible.
- After school, spend time with friends outdoors instead of at home or inside.
- Everyone should wash their hands before they leave and after they get home. Clean personal things like mobile phones, backpacks, water bottles and lunch containers before and after school or other outings.



## Teach children about prevention at school

- Wash hands often. Before and after play, going outside, eating, using the washroom, blowing their nose or touching shared things like toys, phones or computers.
- Be aware that some hand sanitizers may not be safe for children and youth. Read labels carefully.
- Encourage children to avoid physical contact. This is more important than keeping 2 metres apart.
- Teach children about keeping their hands below their shoulders, so they don't touch their face.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with their elbow or tissue. Put tissues straight in the garbage.
- It is usually not recommended that children wear masks as it may lead to increased touching of the face. Masks are not necessary in schools where other safety measures are implemented. However, some parents may choose to allow their child to wear a mask. Respect others' choices to wear or not wear a mask.
- If an older child wants to wear a mask, [show them how to do so safely](#).
- Avoid sharing food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes or vaping devices.
- Don't bring toys to school.



## Be open and honest with kids and teens

- Listen to children who might be worried about going back.
- Let them ask questions.
- Maintain familiar activities like mealtimes and outdoor exercise.
- Focus on positive behaviours like hand washing.
- Help children realize that they can do a lot to protect themselves and others.
- Encourage children to recognize, prevent and talk about COVID-19 stigma.

