



SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Good afternoon families,

As you are likely aware, on Monday, March 29th, Dr. Bonnie Henry, our Provincial Health Officer, announced a series of provincial restrictions to be in effect until at least April 19. Many of these restrictions do not directly impact schools; however, the age requirements to wear a mask in schools have changed.

For more information regarding the details of these changes, you can find two documents in your email (sent April 1st 2021). These documents will also be posted to our Sacred Heart Catholic School Facebook page.

- 1) Public Health Guidelines for K-12 Settings from the BC CDC
- 2) Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings.

In brief, effective immediately, all personnel, adult volunteers and all students in **Grades 4 to 12 are required** to wear a non-medical mask at all times while indoors at the school. Certain accommodations will be made:

- For a person who is unable to wear a mask because they do not tolerate it (for health or behavioural reasons)
- For a person unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person
- If the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it
- If the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (ex., actively playing a wind instrument, high intensity physical activity, etc)
- If a person is eating or drinking
- If a person is behind a barrier
- While providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment) where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important visualizations.

K-3 students are encouraged to wear masks while indoors at the school, though this remains a personal choice and/or the choice of the family.

In addition, all personnel, adult volunteers, and **Grade 4-12 students are required to wear a non-medical mask while on a bus.** Exceptions to this include:

- The bus driver while driving
- A person who is unable to wear a mask because they do not tolerate it (for health or behavioural reasons)
- A person unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person
- If the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it
- If a person is eating or drinking

Additional direction in various areas of school operations and programming has been provided in the updated the Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings, among them:

- Staff Only Spaces
- Working with Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities
- School Gatherings & Events
- Student Transportation on Buses
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Music Programs
- Physical and Health Education/Outdoor Programs
- School Sports
- Theatre, Film & Dance Programs

The CISKD Health and Safety Protocols document has been updated accordingly with changes/updates highlighted in yellow for ease of reference. Please review this updated document. This document is available on the school website.

You will note that the BCCDC addendum uses language such as "should" while the K-12 guidelines use "require". While this may seem like conflicting language, this is in alignment with previous iterations of these guidelines and schools are required to follow the K-12 guidelines.

The Ministry of Education is presently working, in consultation with public health and provincial education partners, to produce a FAQ document to address more nuanced mask wearing questions coming from the K-12 sector.

Our Sacred Heart Catholic School staff will implement these changes, upon our return from the Easter weekend. Thank you in advance for supporting the protocols and for helping keep our school safe. As in previous months, there will be masks available should students forget to bring a non-reusable mask.

If you have **any questions or concerns**, please don't hesitate to call me.

Blessings,

Vanessa Fer

Principal

Sacred Heart Catholic School

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