



September 1, 2021

Dear School District Superintendents and Principals,

The new school year is around the corner and we are committed to supporting your efforts in welcoming students and staff back to school. Schools play an essential role in communities. Allowing children to return to closer-to-normal learning, recreational and social activities is important for their wellbeing during the pandemic.

In light of increased COVID-19 activity across the Interior Region, Medical Health Officers are recommending additional prevention measures above and beyond those included within the [Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) and [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#). These measures should be implemented starting September 7th:

- Indoor assemblies are limited to 50 people or two classes (whatever is larger), in a single space.
- Visitors entering the school should be limited to those supporting activities that are of benefit to student learning and wellbeing (e.g. teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.).
- Extracurricular school sports should follow the [Interior Health Order](#) for Gatherings & Events, where sports and tournaments are allowed. Spectators should be limited to 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors.

We will provide written notice when these additional prevention measures can be removed.

Ensuring everyone eligible has two doses of COVID-19 vaccine is the most effective protective measure. Everyone eligible who is entering a school is strongly encouraged to get fully vaccinated.

Public Health will continue to conduct contact tracing for every case of COVID-19. The Interior Health Communicable Disease Unit will connect with any student or staff who tests positive for COVID-19 to determine whether they were infectious at school. Individuals identified by public health as [close contacts](#) will be directly provided with information on what actions they should take, including whether they should self-monitor or self-isolate. School district Superintendents will be made aware when an exposure at school is suspected to have resulted in school transmission. In these situations, it is anticipated that self-isolation will be recommended for close contacts who are unvaccinated, which may be larger groupings of students and staff, including entire classrooms.

The K-12 Pandemic Recovery Team (formerly Rapid Response Team) will continue to provide support to all IHA schools, including independent and First Nations schools.

Please include this information where relevant in your communications to staff, parents/caregivers and students in advance of school starting.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Dr. Sue Pollock in black ink.

Dr. Sue Pollock
Interim Chief Medical Health Officer

Handwritten signature of Dr. Carol Fenton in black ink.

Dr. Carol Fenton
Medical Health Officer

Handwritten signature of Dr. Karin Goodison in black ink.

Dr. Karin Goodison
Medical Health Officer

Handwritten signature of Dr. Shobhit Maruti in blue ink.

Dr. Shobhit Maruti
Medical Health Officer

Handwritten signature of Dr. Silvina Mema in black ink.

Dr. Silvina Mema
Medical Health Officer

Handwritten signature of Dr. Fatemeh Sabet in blue ink.

Dr. Fatemeh Sabet
Medical Health Officer

We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate, and work together. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.