



Background:

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic, changing what we know as normal.

On March 17, 2020, our provincial health officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, declared a public health emergency in British Columbia and ordered all elementary and secondary brick and mortar schools be closed indefinitely. Selkirk Montessori School was ready to step into the 'new normal' with rich distance learning programs up and running for students the first day back after spring break.

On May 6, 2020, Premier Horgan outlined a four-phase plan to reopen BC's economy, health care system and schools.

On Friday, May 15, 2020, the Minister of Education and Dr. Bonnie Henry expanded on the plan to reopen schools.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-education-restart-plan.pdf?bcgovtm=20200506_GCPE_AM_COVID_9_NOTIFICATION_BCGOV_BCGOV_EN_BC_NOTIFICATION

We are opening our brick and mortar school from June 1-19th, with distance education still available to those who can keep their children at home. Please note that for this gradual return to be compliant and safe, the student grouping has been reduced to maximum density of 50% and students in preschool through grade 5 will be coming to the building on an A/B schedule. This schedule will consist of two cohort groups each attending two consecutive days for preschool through grade 6 and one day each for grades 7/8. We request that parents respect the days assigned, as we are attempting to keep small bubbles of staff and students.

We will be doing our best to create balanced groups and accommodate siblings attending on the same day. We will not be taking requests regarding friends. Children of essential service workers may be asked to provide a letter from their employer and will qualify for childcare on additional days.

We require everyone to abide by the new protocols outlined in this document. We all need to work together to keep our staff and students safe and healthy. What happens from June 1 -19 will provide a window into what September 2020 will look like. Over the summer months, things may change as we move forward to the September start date. We will be updating this document, as well as advising everyone of the changes, as we move forward.

We will be following Dr. Henry's orders and all of the health and safety measures recommended by the Ministries of Education, Health and Children and Family Development, as well as the WorkSafe protocols to ensure that the risk to our staff and students is mitigated.

Developing a COVID-19 safety plan

Employers are required to develop a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Understanding the risk

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk.

- The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. Physical distancing measures help mitigate this risk.
- The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

Restricting Access to the school:

- All workers and students who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days or were identified as a close contact of a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 must stay home and self-isolate in accordance with guidance from the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#).
- It is the Parent's / Caregiver's responsibility to complete the daily health check to school before sending their child.
- If a student develops symptoms while at home, parents or caregivers must keep their child at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, and their symptoms have resolved.
- If a student develops symptoms outlined in the health check while at school staff will:
 - Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area.
 - Contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up immediately.
 - Contact 811 or the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.
 - Where possible, maintain a distance of 2 metres from the ill student. If not possible, staff may wear a mask if available and tolerated.
 - Provide the student with tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform regular hand hygiene.
 - Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva)
 - Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene.
 - Notify workers responsible for facility cleaning to clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas 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.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up

We have been advised that pick up and drop off of children should occur outside the physical building.

- For the three weeks in June, we will have staff stationed at the Jutland Road, Kiss & Go (Jackladder), Orca Class (Jackladder), Chickadee (outside), Casa (outside) and Hummingbird (second floor) entrances. Students will be welcomed into the building at slightly staggered times when they 'come and go' to help with parent's social distancing. You will be notified which entrance you will use and at what time before school starts.
- School staff will confirm the daily health check at drop-off by asking parents and caregivers to confirm it was completed and their child is safe to attend. For older children, we will simply ask about the completed check and if they are feeling well. Hands will be sanitized before entering the building, and students will proceed directly to their classroom to meet their teachers.
- Each time a student enters or exits their room, they will wash their hands. Sanitizer will be used when in outside spaces.

Student Management and Hygiene

Teachers have been working in their classrooms to create a new environment for students that is inviting and safe.

- Desks are situated about the classroom in order that students see each other, but from the required safe distance. Each child will be assigned a desk they will use for the three weeks of school. These desks will be sanitized before the alternate group attends and it is used by another student.
- Children will be allocated a collection of necessary school supplies, which will be kept in a plastic bag on their desk. Students will sanitize and bring their work boxes, pencil cases, and relevant workbooks back to school for the final three weeks. Devices for accessing Google Classroom may come to back and forth with students but will be sanitized upon entry and exit and should be sanitized before packing to come to school.
- Each child must bring in a sanitized pair of indoor shoes that will stay at the school for the entire three weeks in June.
- To reduce the amount of movement in the school, students will be remaining within their homeroom class (or 'pod'). Specialists may support the pod in person while continuing some distance delivery and activities for pods and distance learners to benefit from.
- Each of the classrooms will have disinfectant and microbial cloths to use on desks and other high touch surfaces in the classroom. This product has hydrogen peroxide in it, which falls into the acceptable category for licensing requirements. It works at disinfecting and evaporates quickly on surfaces making it the ideal cleaning agent for the classroom setting.

The used cloths will be put into the washing machine by staff, laundered and redistributed daily.

- A sanitizing station has been set up in the gym so that equipment is thoroughly cleaned between groups.
- While everyone has been away during these past 3 months, all of the Montessori and other materials in the classrooms have been disinfected and shelves have been covered up for sterility purposes. This was done with the return of students in mind. Rooms will also be deep cleaned on Wednesdays between the turnover of groups.
- Deep cleaning was undertaken in the washrooms over spring break. We are in the process of having the paper towel, soap dispenser and matching toilet paper dispensers changed over. They are manual touchless units and will help to encourage the students to wash their hands (foamy soap). These units are hopefully to be installed before the start of June 1.
- We are also arranging additional janitorial services during the day to include high-touch areas in the school such as doors and handles, stair railings, washrooms, light switches, water fountains and more.
- Our elevator will be turned off due to the lack of sufficient room to social distance. Should you require the assistance of the elevator please contact the office.
- All water fountains (spouts) will be covered. Students will be encouraged to bring water bottles to schools which can be refilled during the day.
- We will be keeping windows open in the classrooms as much as possible. Our air circulation systems are recirculating rather than recycling, which is healthier and safer for staff and students.
- We will be working to have the children outside as much as possible. We have been advised by the Ministry of Health that playgrounds are safe, and we will encourage appropriate hand hygiene practices before, during and after outdoor play.
- Adults in the school will maintain the appropriate social distancing from each other. We will be talking to the students about reducing physical contact as much as possible; however, they will not be required to maintain the same social distancing measures as the adults.
- We have always encouraged a diligent hand washing routine. This will be enhanced to include the following times:
 - When they arrive at school and before they go home
 - Before eating and drinking
 - After using the toilet
 - After sneezing or coughing into hands or tissue
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty
 - Upon returning to the classroom
- Staff may assist younger students with hand hygiene, as needed.
- In addition to regular sink and soap, hand sanitizer will be available for use.
- Food should not be prepared or shared by students.

Physical distancing

- By default, parents and caregivers will remain outside of the school to drop off their children. (Exceptions will be made for vulnerable students)
- Regardless of your own comfort levels, avoid close greetings like hugs or handshakes and remind students to keep their hands to themselves when possible. Remember that this lessened physical contact is a stress for students as well and we need to role model.
- The use of more online resources may continue to be accessed for Middle Years to allow more distancing options.
- Classes may learn outside, when practical.
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff. For younger students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items. For adolescent students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- Organize students into smaller groups that stay together throughout the day.
- Strive to minimize the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day.
- As a school we will avoid communal learning spaces.
- Eliminate group food preparation and consumption.

Safety for Staff:

Not all the staff will be returning to work onsite. Some may not be able to due to existing health issues. Because of this, students may be with different teachers than they are used to. We will be making every effort to have one familiar adult in each space. On the day's students do not attend onsite, they are welcome to attend online programming with their class.

Administration Areas:

Admin staff will:

- Limit the public coming into the school. Parents will be required to drop their students off outside the building at their designated entrance. Parents and others are welcome to call instead of visiting the school.
- Close the office to all but administrative staff.
- Protect the reception area with a plexiglass barrier.

Physical distancing

- A certain number of seating spaces will be available in the staff room. Please respect this as a necessary step. Staff are encouraged to utilise outdoor spaces or other alternatives.
- Adults will maintain 2 meters of distance between themselves and other adults.
- Maintain reasonable physical distancing whenever possible between workers and students.
- Manage the flow of people in public spaces such as hallways and on stairs.

Hygiene

- Hand washing supplies are available at all times (i.e., soap, clean towels, paper towels and hand sanitizer).
- Staff will continue to wash their hands frequently to reduce the risk of transmission.

Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Where PPE has been identified for tasks prior to COVID-19 pandemic, continue to use this PPE when performing these tasks (i.e. gloves when cleaning a cut).
- For their personal safety, face shields will be available for staff who choose to wear them.

Cleaning and Sanitizing:

- Selkirk Montessori School has been cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BC CDC's [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#). Cleaning practices will remain in line with the provincial health officer's [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings](#).
- High-traffic areas and high-contact surfaces such as doors and cabinet handles, stair railings, washrooms, shared office spaces, desks, keyboards, light switches, and communications devices will receive extra daily focus, both from classroom staff and janitorial staff.
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day.
- Selkirk Montessori School will incorporate end-of-shift wipe downs for all shared spaces.

Communication Strategies:

- Staff are reminded that all health and safety measures in place prior to the pandemic are still in place.
- Before returning to the workplace, there will be a health and safety meeting to review workplace practices relating to COVID-19 and other health and safety matters. Additional communication may be required as new information is made available that may affect work practices.
- Parents and caregivers will need to receive reminders to fully understand our policy that students must stay home if they are sick.
- Selkirk Montessori School will restrict non-essential people coming into the school such as deliveries.
- Due to the evolving nature of this crisis, updates will be made available to all parties at the earliest possible time.

We all look forward to June and the opportunity to see many of our students in person! If you have any questions about these protocols, please contact penny@selkirkmontessori.ca, erin@selkirkmontessori.ca or linda@selkirkmontessori.ca.