

October 19, 2020

Dear Parents,

You're likely hearing, with some regularity, about confirmed COVID-19 cases or incidents of exposure at both public and independent high schools in the Lower Mainland. While this may seem worrisome, we must consider that cases of COVID in BC schools are expected. We should expect that living in a global pandemic will be a societal norm for the foreseeable future, and it is probably only a matter of time before our school community has a confirmed, positive COVID case or an incident of exposure. Fortunately, there have been low transmission rates in the school system due to the health and safety protocols in place, and that younger children, in particular, are not regarded to be at high risk of spreading the infection.

The BCCDC recently released data looking specifically from the time the province's students returned to school in September.

- The proportion of school-aged children who test positive for COVID-19 is still under 10% of total cases in BC (virtually unchanged from July and August)
- Most cases in schools are unrelated to school exposure and instead come from family bubbles or other activities
- In recent weeks, each positive case in BC is transmitting, on average, to fewer than one person

- BCCDC COVID-19: Fall Update, Oct 5/20

As always, our greatest priority is the overall safety and wellbeing of our students and community members. It is very important that we all remain calm and empathetic and pass these sentiments on to our children so they can continue their learning without undue worry. Students will be looking to us for how to react in these times, and we would ask that we all live our values of kindness and community.

We have confidence in the safety and hygiene protocols in place at King David. We're also grateful for the support from our families, each doing their part, by carefully monitoring the health of their children and working with our students to carry out our school protocols. By continuing to work together, we'll keep our students and our extended families as safe and well as possible.

When we do have a confirmed COVID exposure, please remember King David must act in accordance with, and under the direction of, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). Public health will investigate, conduct all contact tracing, and communicate directly with only those school staff and families affected. When permitted by VCH, we will communicate directly with you. Please remember that in these situations, the school is required to strictly follow the instructions of the health authority and is not able to share any specific details. Please see Appendix C of our Exposure Control Plan (ECP) for a general outline of the sequence of communication.

Again, thank you. If there is a positive to be gained from this pandemic, it is the ongoing willingness of our community members to do what is required: to work together, to want the best for our children and one another. With this continued collective approach, we will get through this together.

We will continue to update you regularly, and communicate with you as quickly and efficiently as possible when new developments occur. For now, please see below for an updated Q&A and links to information.

Best Regards,
Alex

Q: What is the difference between a positive case of COVID-19 and a confirmed incident of exposure?

A: A positive case of COVID-19 is where a member of our school community, either student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19.

An incident of exposure is where a member(s) of our school community, either a student or staff member, has been in contact with a person outside the school community who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Q: How can we have a case of COVID-19 if we have health and safety protocols in place?

A: Our health and safety protocols are solid and they help us to maintain a controlled environment. However, someone from our community, through no fault of their own, could still be exposed to the virus. We understand this increases our worry, and may feel like a setback, but this is part of our reality for the year ahead. We have multiple layers of protection in our health and safety protocols that help reduce the risk of exposure, including:

- Parents conducting daily health checks
- Not coming to school if sick
- Practicing proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Practicing physical distancing
- Wearing masks at all times in the school building

Q. What are you doing to ensure my child's safety?

A. King David has implemented strict health and safety measures and protocols as per our 2020-2021 Exposure Control Plan (ECP). These protocols are in place to minimize the risk of exposure. Our detailed health and safety plans are available in the 2020-2021 ECP [here](#) or on the school website. This plan includes details about how our school is adhering to all provincial mandates including enhanced cleaning procedures, hand hygiene protocols and grouping of students into learning cohorts.

Q: What should we do now?

A: There are a few things that parents should focus on during this time:

- Be sure to be calm and empathetic with your fellow King David parents and children. Our children take the lead from us adults; it's important that we set a positive example.
- Complete a daily health check with your child prior to coming to school and do not send your children to school if they exhibit any of the key symptoms listed.
- Limit your bubble outside school. While we can do our utmost at school to implement health and safety practices, we are all at risk of inadvertently exposing ourselves to COVID-19 through other activities such as work, socializing, and sports/arts participation. Please limit these engagements as much as possible.
- Remind your children about the protocols that we should be following.

Q: Why can't the school share more detailed information on a positive case or confirmed exposure?

A: Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) provides limited information to schools in these cases. All the information that we can share will be issued as promptly as possible with all families. All contact tracing occurs through Vancouver Coastal Health who communicates additional information only to individuals concerned.

Q. What can families expect around the timing of the school communicating positive COVID cases or confirmed exposures?

A. As always, we remain committed to open and transparent communication with our families. We will continue to share COVID-19 information and updates with families at our school in order to maintain your trust and confidence. We will be limited in what we are allowed to share and will not be allowed to disclose specifics including the name of any student or staff member who may be involved. In some cases, a family may inform the school that a family member or student attending King David has tested positive. This will not immediately trigger a communication to families as we are required to take the lead from VCH when communicating any potential or confirmed exposures to our community. We thank families for their patience on this point as we understand some news may travel through personal relationships among parents first.