# Health and Safety Orientation Checklist for First Nation Schools

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This checklist is provided by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) to support First Nation communities and schools in planning their health & safety orientation for staff, students, and families. It is adapted from a resource developed by the BC Ministry of Education.

Orientation sessions should be provided and should give an overview of the key principles and guidelines outlined in the resources listed below, as well as information on how they will be implemented within the school:

1. [BCCDC’s COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf)
2. [The Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf)
3. [WorkSafeBC’s Education (K-12): Protocols for returning to operation](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/education)
4. The reopening plan for your school (School Plan)

Key considerations from the first three guideline documents are provided in FNESC and FNSA’s [First Nation Schools Reopening Considerations and Template](http://www.fnesc.ca/covid19/reopening-considerations-template/), but please consult the above documents on a regular basis as the guidance may be updated over time. The fourth document, the School Plan, will be specific to your school.

If appropriate for your school, local First Nation leadership as well as representatives from other departments internal to your First Nation (e.g. Health) should be invited to attend the orientation.

Schools should establish a health and safety committee prior to the orientation session. At the beginning of the school year, holding more frequent health and safety meetings can help identify and address any concerns in a timely manner.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Adopt a trauma-informed approach:

* If possible, consider having an employee trained in trauma-informed practice available during the orientation and provide information on how students and families can access counselling services and mental health supports.

Highlight the process used to develop the School Plan and the provincial health and safety guidelines:

* The Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings have been developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Indigenous rightsholders and education partners, including district/school leaders, teachers, support staff, and parents.
* These guidelines are based on the public health guidance developed by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control.

☐ Discuss the importance of implementing health and safety measures that promote equity and inclusion and outline how these principles are reflected in the School Plan.

Review the health and safety guidelines and School Plan, and describe what a school day will look like with the new guidelines (interactions between peers and staff, traffic flow throughout the school, transition times, recess/lunch, school schedule, etc.).

Outline how prevention and exposure control measures are being implemented in schools to ensure student and staff safety (see the “Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures” section and the Prioritizing Health and Safety Flowcharts in the [Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf) for more information).

Discuss plans for extra-curricular activities, as well as school-wide activities and events; provide opportunities for staff and students to put forward alternatives to continue to support events in a different format if needed (e.g., virtual event).

Review school emergency and evacuation procedures (e.g., fire drill) considering the new health and safety guidelines (e.g. establishing additional muster points to reduce gathering size).

Outline individual responsibilities (e.g., daily health check, stay home if sick, etc.) and remind everyone to do their part (e.g., practice diligent hand hygiene on a regular basis, only bring personal items if they are necessary, specific guidelines for visitors, etc.).

Outline measures in place to support students and staff who are severely immunocompromised.

Implement strategies to ensure staff and students who cannot attend the orientation and/or staff who work at multiple sites are made aware of health and safety protocols (e.g., provide a booklet or a video).

Provide enough time and space for staff, students and families to review the plan, ask questions, and provide input; provide contact information for any future questions that may arise.

Describe the process to address concerns and suggestions regarding the health and safety plan (e.g., suggestions to support continuous improvement).

Outline the process in place to assess and revise the School Plan on an ongoing basis as well as how staff, students, families, and First Nation leadership will be made aware of any changes in the plan.

Communicate proactively and on an ongoing basis about the changes made to policies, practices, and procedures to ensure staff, students, families and First Nation leadership are informed in a timely manner.

Provide a list of resources and links for more information (e.g., [BCCDC resources](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/resources-at-a-glance) (including a [poster on how to wear a mask](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/how-put-remove-clean-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html)), [resources from the Government of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/how-put-remove-clean-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html) on how to put on, remove, store and clean a non-medical mask/face covering, guidelines developed by provincial associations, Ministry-developed [trauma-informed practice resources](https://mytrainingbc.ca/traumainformedpractice/), or other resources such as [videos from the BC Health Emergency Services](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB3gsij7i8NvQxnBEVsiVFQ/videos)), and [resources from FNESC and FNSA](http://www.fnsa.ca).

## CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO STAFF

Provide a detailed to overview to staff (administrators, teachers, support staff, school staff, etc.) regarding what the first days of school will look like to welcome students back

* If appropriate, consider involving representatives from school staff in the delivery of information pertaining to specific areas of expertise.

Ensure orientation includes specific health and safety protocol for itinerant staff and specialists (e.g., counsellors, education assistants, teacher candidates), including protocols pertaining to site-based scheduling and access to the building.

Include itinerant staff as well as on-call and auxiliary staff in orientation sessions.

Share procedures and contact information in case of emergencies.

Introduce members of any health and safety committee representatives (along with their contact information) and outline their role in helping maintain a healthy and safe workplace.