

Toti:Itcha

Future Learning Plan

**School Strategy
for 2021-2022**

Updated: January 18, 2022



Acknowledgment

Éy swáyel. We acknowledge that the Abbotsford School District is located on the traditional territory of the Stó:lō people, the Semá:th and Mathxwí First Nation. With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public educational institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching and community engagement.

Toti:lthcha

*A Halq'eméylem word that means **future learning**.*

We are grateful for the opportunity to utilize the language of the Stó:lō people to assist us in our future work, with indigenous perspectives in mind.

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Message from the Superintendent

I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to all our staff and students back to what we hope will be a wonderful school year. As we look forward to opportunities in the weeks and months ahead, I once again extend sincere thanks to our staff for getting us through last year. What we accomplished in British Columbia, and particularly here in Abbotsford, was truly amazing. Our society owes a debt of gratitude to the teachers, support staff, principals and managers who pulled together to care for our students when they needed us most. In addition, our students should be congratulated for their resilience under the most difficult of circumstances.

While we had hoped that we would return to a “normal” school year, we are delighted that our schools will be operating almost at Stage 1. We are optimistic that the worst of the pandemic is behind us and that we can now provide our students with the education they deserve, and without significant restrictions. Vaccinations are taking hold, and coupled with carefully constructed safety guidelines, we trust that students will fully access the range of opportunities we have a long history of providing. Built on what we learned last year, Toti:Itcha 2021-2022 outlines the critical things we will do to keep our students and staff safe while we bring our very best to realize our vision for a “world-class, innovative and individualized educational experience for each child.”

I wish you all a wonderful year, and appreciate the cooperation and assistance of families in working together to keep our schools safe. If we all do our part, we can minimize risk for our students and the community at large and make this year a truly positive one for our children.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kevin Godden,
Superintendent of Schools

Planning for the School Year

On September 7, 2021, all students will return to school for in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year.



Toti:Itcha – our future learning plan – was developed last year to serve as a framework for September 2020 and beyond during the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we enter into another year navigating our current world, this document will continue to serve as our guide to address the health, safety, teaching and learning needs required to fulfil our vision of providing a world-class, innovative, and individualized educational experience for each student.

On Wednesday, December 29, 2021, Minister of Education Whiteside and Provincial Health Officer (PHO) Dr. Bonnie Henry announced at a joint news conference the delayed return to school for students for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year. The date was moved from January 4, 2022 to January 10, 2022. During the week of January 4, 2022, all staff returned to work and used the time to update the district's health and safety protocols and to develop plans for the continuity of learning for the coming weeks and months.

- [BCCDC COVID-19 Guidance for K-12](#)
- [Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12](#)
- [Addendum – Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)

British Columbia's Provincial Health Officer and the Minister of Education will continue to monitor developments around the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that, at any point during the school year, the province could decide whether schools across British Columbia, schools in a particular region, or individual schools and classrooms need to move from one stage to another. This decision will always be made by the Provincial Health Officer, in collaboration with education officials.

Our School District's Strategy

The Abbotsford School District developed this strategy prior to the 2020-2021 school year, using our *Toti:Itcha* framework, so families would know what to expect in schools across the city.

For the 2021-2022 school year, we will follow the same direction and have prepared this document to address the areas related to health, safety, teaching and learning.

This document will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis and will be updated as required to fit in alignment with the most recent information and health advice from the province related to COVID-19.

Health & Safety

The health and safety of our staff, students and families continues to be our top priority for the 2021-2022 school year.

Health and safety are important organizational priorities and represent a key component of our mental well-being and social-emotional learning (SEL) focus, and we all play a critical role in following the safety protocols set out by British Columbia's Provincial Health Officer.

Vaccinations

Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools. Those 5 and over are eligible to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves and those around them – including those who are not eligible to be vaccinated.

→ [Get Vaccinated portal](#)

On January 17, 2022 the PHO released a new order: [School Staff Member Vaccination Status Reporting](#). This order enables local Medical Health Officers (MHOs) to direct school boards and independent school authorities to obtain the vaccination status of school staff and share with the MHO in aggregate form.

The purpose of this order is to support MHOs, when necessary, to obtain information about K-12 staff vaccination rates to assess, advise on and respond to risks arising from exposures, cases, clusters and outbreaks in schools.

It is important to note that this order requires an MHO to issue a directive to a specific district/school authority to be actioned and does not apply until/if such a directive is issued.

Daily Health Checks

To reduce the likelihood of coming to a school or district site when ill, students, staff and other adults (e.g. visitors) are required to complete a daily health check prior to entering the building.

Families and students can use the K-12 Health Check app to review the daily health check. Students, staff or other adults must stay home when ill or when required by public health to self-isolate.

→ [K-12 Daily Health Check](#)

→ [BC COVID Thrive Self-Assessment Tool](#)

Masks

All students in grades 4 to 12, K-12 staff, and visitors will be required to wear non-medical masks in all indoor areas of schools, including when they are at workstations/desks and on school buses.

Students in kindergarten to grade 3 are encouraged to wear masks in all indoor areas of a school. For students in a grade 3/4 combined class, the mask requirement will apply to all students, including those in grade 3.

Exemptions to the mask requirement are listed in the COVID-19 [Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#).

School Exposure Notifications

With the emergence of the more transmissible Omicron variant of COVID-19, the district stopped receiving individual COVID-19 notifications on December 28, 2021. With higher levels of community transmission, a shorter virus incubation period, and the increased use of rapid antigen testing, contact tracing and close contact notification by public health is no longer effective in minimizing the spread of COVID-19. As such, our district will no longer be able to alert families of individual COVID-19 cases. Should a school setting be impacted by an outbreak, families will be notified and advised of the appropriate next steps.

Rapid Antigen Tests

On January 14, 2022, we were advised by the Ministry of Education that our district will receive a shipment of rapid antigen tests in January. Our first batch of tests will go to employees to support with symptomatic testing and minimize the risks to school operations.

→ [K-12 Staff – Rapid Antigen Instructions](#)

It is our intention to expand a future shipment to support students with symptomatic testing.

Cohorts

Cohorts, also known as learning groups, are no longer recommended by public health as a COVID-19 mitigation measure and will not be used during the 2021-2022 school year.

Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water reduces the spread of illness. Schools and district sites will promote proper hand hygiene with verbal reminders and visual cues throughout the buildings, along with ensuring hand-washing supplies are well stocked and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol is available.

Cleaning & Disinfection

All of our custodial teams will follow infection control procedures detailed in the [COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) to ensure our buildings are safe and sanitized.

Physical Distancing

Public health no longer recommends strict physical distancing of two metres. However, schools and district sites will work on strategies to help with respecting personal space, including using available learning spaces and taking students and learning opportunities outside, where and when possible.

Ventilation

In preparation for back to school, ventilation systems were inspected at all schools and district sites, and updated in some cases. We are continuously working to optimize air quality in our buildings through existing or upgraded Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems or stand-alone High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtration units, dependent on the type of ventilation and feasibility within the context of school facilities and related building systems.

Our ventilation systems will continue to be inspected quarterly, where our teams will do an overall physical inspection, including changing the filters. A HEPA unit will be installed to ensure the air is changed frequently for the few classrooms and areas within our buildings that rely on natural ventilation.

Families who have concerns over air quality or ventilation are encouraged to bring them forward to their school principal. Staff who have concerns over air quality or ventilation are encouraged to bring them forward to their JOSH Committee.

Safety Training & Orientation for Staff

The COVID-19 Health and Safety Training Program and site-based orientation have been incorporated into the new worker orientation and the dispatch process for casual/TTOC staff to ensure all new staff coming to, or returning to, our sites are aware of our health and safety procedures.

Further details on how health and safety measures will be implemented for the 2021-2022 school year:

→ [BCCDC COVID-19 Guidance for K-12](#)

→ [Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12](#)

School Operations

Many of our day-to-day school operations will return to near-normal for the 2021-2022 school year.

School Plans

During the first week of January, schools were busy preparing continuity of learning plans and outlining enhanced safety measures in advance of students returning to school on Monday, January 10, 2022. School specific plans have been finalized. Please check your child's school website for accurate details.

Arriving at School

Schools will implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times and provide a greater amount of space for everyone. Bell times will vary school to school, so please check your child's school website for accurate details.

Families who would like to visit their child's school are encouraged to continue to make an appointment when and where possible.

REMINDER! Families are responsible to have completed a [daily health check](#) of their child before arriving on campus.

Communication & Signage

Schools will continue to work to clearly and consistently communicate guidance, recommendations and Orders from regional Medical Health Officers and the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), including COVID-19 resources.

Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water reduces the spread of illness. Schools and district sites will promote proper hand hygiene with verbal reminders and posters throughout the buildings, along with ensuring hand-washing supplies are well stocked and where appropriate, alcohol-based

hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol is available.

Traffic Flow within Buildings

District sites may use a variety of visual cues (arrows, standing dots) to help indicate traffic patterns and prevent crowding in high-traffic areas.

Lockers

Students can continue to use their lockers, as it is better for personal items to be stored in a locker than to be stored in classrooms or carried throughout the school.

Assigned Seating

Students may be asked to follow assigned seating plans throughout the day in the classroom, as a strategic option to encourage physical distancing.

For school buses, schools will return to regular seating and onloading/offloading practices.

Supplies and Learning Materials

Students and staff can continue to bring personal items and school supplies to school for their own use.

Water Fountains/Filling Stations

Limiting access to water fountains/filling stations is no longer recommended. When using water fountains, students and staff are reminded to practice hand hygiene before and after use and not place their mouths on the fountain.

Common Areas

Schools will work to manage the flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.

Food Services

Food services (e.g., meal programs, cafeterias, fundraisers, etc.) will return to regular operational and food safety practices.

Playgrounds

There is no current evidence of COVID-19 transmission in playground environments. Playgrounds are a safe environment and will be available for full use.

Library Learning Commons

There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing/return of books or paper-based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

Volunteers and Visitors

Schools will be responsible for ensuring that volunteers and visitors are aware of communicable disease protocols and requirements, and have completed a daily health check, prior to entering the school. Please check in with your school regarding visitor access.

Family and School Communication

Families can stay in contact with their schools through their school website, social media, email and phone.

Families who are contacted to pick up a sick child should attend a school site immediately. The person picking up the student must be safe to enter the school based on the [Daily Health Check](#). Family members will be asked to wear a non-medical mask.

Throughout the school year, families can expect regular and frequent communication from school administration and school district leadership.

Transportation

Transportation will return to normal operations and routes. This includes regular seating and unloading/offloading school bus practices.

Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least 1x/day and when visibly dirty. Other general cleaning will occur in line with regular practices.

Bus drivers must wear a non-medical mask on school buses, except while driving. All Grade 4 – 12 students must wear a non-medical mask or face coverings on buses. Students in Grades K to 3 are encouraged to wear a non-medical mask or face covering on school buses but are not required to do so - mask wearing remains a personal or family/caregiver choice for these students, and their choices must be respected.

REMINDER! Families are responsible to have completed a [daily health check](#) of their child before sending them to school on the bus. Students with COVID-19 symptoms or experiencing illness will not be permitted on the bus.

Emergency Procedures

Schools will continue to practice various emergency procedures, including six school fire evacuation drills required annually by BC Fire Code 2.8.3.2, lockdown drills, etc.

Further details on how school operations will look for the 2021-2022 school year:

→ [BCCDC COVID-19 Guidance for K-12](#)

→ [Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12](#)

Teaching & Learning

We are committed to providing meaningful and engaging learning opportunities for each student.

Instruction

On September 7, 2021, all schools in British Columbia will return to in-class instruction for all students for the 2021-2022 school year.

Having students in the classroom helps to minimize learning gaps and provide the academic, social and emotional supports essential for learning.

Homeschooling and Distributed Learning

We recognize some families, for their own personal reasons, are not prepared to send their children back to school for in-person learning. As such, families should enroll their child in either homeschool or distributed learning options, both of which are offered at [Abbotsford Virtual School](#).

StrongStarts, Preschools and Daycares

All StrongStart locations will open in September. Locations and schedules will be available on the school district website mid-September.

Before and after school care programs will be in full operation. Pre-schools will be in full operation. Parents needing this service should contact their around/preschool service provider.

Kindergarten

Specific information regarding Kindergarten start-up and the gradual entry process will be communicated through the district's and specific school's websites by mid-September.

Equitable Support for Diverse Learners

To ensure equitable access to learning, we will pay specific attention to the diverse needs of our students. Integrated school-based teams will prepare for differentiated supports for vulnerable students. A school-wide approach will be taken to addressing the impact of distance learning on underserved and/or vulnerable students. These students will be prioritized for

higher access to daily interventions. These students will also have access to enhanced transition support to start the school year. This includes connecting with families of students who are medically fragile and ensuring that Learning Services Teachers collaborate closely with classroom teachers on student IEPs.

Curriculum, Programs & Activities

The 2021-2022 school year includes greater opportunities for school sports, music and extracurricular activities. All curriculum, programs and activities will operate near normal this year while in alignment with provincial K-12 health and safety guidelines, including school-led activities held off campus (e.g., sports academies, community-based programs/courses, field trips, fundraisers, etc.). Schools should continue to implement ongoing communicable disease prevention practices specific to the activity.

Parameters for how curriculum, programs and activities can be conducted are provided by the [BCCDC](#) and the [Ministry of Education](#).

Further details on teacher and learning for the 2021-2022 school year:

- [BCCDC COVID-19 Guidance for K-12](#)
- [Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12](#)

Mental Health & Well-Being

Mental health and well-being will be a strong focus for us as we begin to transition to a post-pandemic world.

Supports for Students & Families

While there is excitement about coming back to school, we can also appreciate that some may be feeling anxious about returning. Please be assured that educational staff will be there to support your child as they start their learning routines. We remain committed to supporting families.

Parents or guardians who are concerned about their child's well-being can also reach out to these community resources:

- **Kid's Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868**
Call to speak to a professional counsellor — available 24 hours a day.
- **Health Link: 8-1-1**
- **Foundry: www.foundrybc.ca**
Access virtual drop-in counselling sessions, peer support check-ins and group offerings to young people ages 12-24 and their caregivers.
- **B.C. Parent**
[Reduce Stress & Prepare for Back to School COVID-19 Resources](#)

Supports for Staff

Staff mental health and wellness will play a vital role in supporting students through this pandemic and beyond. The school district's [Bring Your Best](#) program is designed to ensure employees have the support to be healthy, productive and enjoy their work.

Personal and professional development opportunities to increase knowledge and skills. *Examples include:*

- Health and well-being sessions hosted by Learning Support Services and Human Resources;
- Respect in the Workplace training;
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction training;
- Mental Health First Aid training;
- Sessions on SEL for educators; and
- Health and Safety training.

Opportunities to engage in more personalized learning and supports. *Examples include:*

- Communities of practice and collaboration with others in specific areas of wellness;
- Personal strategies for self-care and stress management;
- Interpersonal and team strategies to build relationships and connection amongst adults;
- Employee and family assistance program;
- Ergonomic assessment and support; and
- Accommodation, prevention and support for recovery from illness and injury

→ [COVID-19 Resources](#)



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