



2022-23 COVID-19 Communicable Disease Plan

In accordance with the Ministry of Education's Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings, revised on August 25, 2022, St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Secondary School (STA) will be continuing with Grades 8-12 in-class instruction only each day. Key changes from the previous school year are highlighted in yellow.

Key Principles

We will be guided by the following principles during the 2022-23 school year:

- Communicable disease prevention measures will continue to be aligned with public health guidance to support staff and student wellness.
- The Provincial or local Medical Health Officer may issue temporary provincial, regional or local recommendations or orders of additional prevention measures during times of increased communicable disease risk.

Prevention Guidance

Vaccination protects from serious illness due to COVID-19 and is the most effective way to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities.

Environmental Practices

Regular cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. We will continue to clean frequently touched surfaces on a regular basis.

Our new school building benefits from having modern HVAC systems which provide good air quality and ventilation.

We will continue to promote regular hand hygiene, with posters in washrooms.

Students will be encouraged to practice proper respiratory etiquette, including coughing or sneezing into their elbow or a tissue, refraining from touching their face with unwashed hands, and refraining from sharing any food, drinks, utensils, cigarettes, vaping devices, etc.

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Administrative Practices

School administrators will ensure that staff, other adults and students are aware that they should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate in routine activities. This will be done by communicating the importance of everyone doing a health check.

Schools are no longer required to monitor staff or students for symptoms.

Staff, students or other persons who are exhibiting new symptoms of illness should stay home and follow the BCCDDC guidance outlined below:

- If you are sick, stay home!
- Use the Thrive app if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.
- If positive for COVID-19, stay home for five days and until symptom-free.

Schools can use classroom and learning environment configurations of their choosing.

Schools can follow normal practice for welcoming visitors and community use of schools.

Schools should follow guidance provided for overnight camps from the BCCDC when planning overnight trips which include group accommodation.

For Music, Physical & Health Education, and Drama, students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after shared equipment use. Equipment which touches the mouth should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.

School libraries can continue with regular book browsing and circulation.

Personal Practices

Everyone at school should practice health awareness, including staying home when sick.

The decision to wear a mask is a personal choice for staff, students and visitors. A person's choice will be supported and respected.

Masks are one layer of protection. To be most effective, wearing a mask should be combined with other important protective measures such as getting all the recommended doses of vaccine, staying home when sick, and regularly practising hand hygiene.

Staff, students and visitors should be encouraged to practice frequent hand hygiene, good respiratory etiquette, and respect for other people's personal space. They should be encouraged not to share items which come in contact with the mouth (e.g. food, drinks, utensils, cigarettes, vaping devices).

Note: All staff were provided with a refresher on the Communicable Disease Plan at the general staff meeting on **September 1, 2022**.

New References for Assessment and Protocols:

BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>

Reporting and Isolation Protocols: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>