

COVID-19 CADTH REFERENCE LIST

# Public Health Interventions for the Prevention of COVID-19 in Schools: Guidelines

**This report was published on November 27, 2020.**

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Version: 1.0  
Publication Date: November 27, 2020  
Report Length: 7 Pages

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**Cite As:** Public health interventions for the prevention of COVID-19 in schools: guidelines. Ottawa: CADTH; 2020 Nov. (CADTH Reference List).

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**Funding:** CADTH receives funding from Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial governments, with the exception of Quebec.

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## Research Question

What are the evidence-based guidelines regarding the use of public health interventions to limit the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in schools?

## Key Findings

Three evidence-based guidelines were identified regarding the use of public health interventions to limit the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in schools.

## Methods

### Literature Search Methods

A limited literature search was conducted by an information specialist on key resources including MEDLINE via OVID, the Cochrane Library, the University of York Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) databases, the websites of Canadian and major international health technology agencies, as well as a focused internet search. The search strategy was comprised of both controlled vocabulary, such as the National Library of Medicine’s MeSH (Medical Subject Headings), and keywords. The main search concepts were COVID-19 and schools or students. Search filters were applied to limit retrieval to guidelines. Where possible, retrieval was limited to the human population. The search was also limited to English language documents published between January 1, 2017 and November 23, 2020. Internet links were provided, where available.

### Selection Criteria and Summary Methods

One reviewer screened literature search results (titles and abstracts) and selected publications according to the inclusion criteria presented in Table 1. Full texts of study publications were not reviewed. Open access full-text versions of evidence-based guidelines were reviewed when abstracts were not available.

**Table 1: Selection Criteria**

<b>Population</b>	Students and staff at schools
<b>Intervention</b>	Any public health intervention that aims to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (i.e., infection prevention and control measures; e.g., face masks, social distancing, hand hygiene, surface disinfection, symptom screening)
<b>Comparator</b>	Not applicable
<b>Outcomes</b>	Recommendations regarding best practices (e.g., guidance around which interventions should be used and how they can be implemented)
<b>Study Designs</b>	Evidence-based guidelines

## Results

Three evidence-based guidelines<sup>1-3</sup> were identified regarding the use of public health interventions to limit the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

Additional references of potential interest that did not meet the inclusion criteria are provided in the appendix.

## Guidelines and Recommendations

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## Appendix — Further Information

### Guidelines – Unclear Methodology

#### Canada

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*See: Increased health & safety measures, page 4; Education delivery by grade level, page 7*
10. Government of Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia's back to school plan. 2020: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/back-to-school-plan.pdf>. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
11. Government of Nunavut. 2020-21 opening plan for Nunavut schools: health and safety. [no date]: [https://gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/files/2020-21\\_opening\\_plan\\_for\\_nunavut\\_schools\\_-\\_eng.pdf](https://gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/files/2020-21_opening_plan_for_nunavut_schools_-_eng.pdf). Accessed 2020 Nov 26.  
*See: Stages of Planning and Levels of Risk, page 9*

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*See: Environmental Measures, page 6; Administrative Measures, page 7*

#### *International*

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*See: Section 4 – Implementation in schools, page 12*
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