

COVID-19 CADTH REFERENCE LIST

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

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Authors: Diksha Kumar, Hannah Loshak

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Questions or requests for information about this report can be directed to requests@cadth.ca

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

Population	Students and staff at schools
Intervention	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)
Comparator	Not applicable
Outcomes	Recommendations regarding best practices (e.g., guidance around which interventions should be used and how they can be implemented)
Study Designs	Evidence-based guidelines

Results

Three evidence-based guidelines¹⁻³ 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

1. Cohen R, Delacourt C, Gras-Le Guen C, Launay E, French Pediatric Society. COVID-19 and schools. Guidelines of the French Pediatric Society. *Arch Pediatr.* 2020;27(7):388-392.
[PubMed: PM32921531](#)
2. Public Health Agency of Canada. COVID-19 guidance for schools kindergarten to grade 12. 2020: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
3. Public Health Agency of Canada. Guidance for post-secondary institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. 2020: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/covid-19-guidance-post-secondary-institutions-during-pandemic.html>. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.

Appendix — Further Information

Guidelines – Unclear Methodology

Canada

4. COVID-19 public health guidance for K-12 school settings. Vancouver (BC): BC Centre for Disease Control; 2020: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
5. Gouvernement du Québec. Safety measures for workers and students in preschool, elementary and secondary schools during COVID-19. 2020: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/preschool-elementary-and-secondary-schools/etablissements-scolaires-prescolaires-primaires-et-secondaires-dans-le-contexte-de-la-covid-19/safety-measures-for-workers-and-children-in-elementary-schools-and-daycare-services-during-covid-19/>. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
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See: Masks, Hygiene and Health Requirements; page 17
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9. Government of Northwest Territories. Reopening NWT schools safely. [no date]: https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/sites/covid/files/resources/reopening_nwt_schools_safely_plan_for_2020-21_eng.pdf. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
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. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
See: Stages of Planning and Levels of Risk, page 9

12. Government of Saskatchewan. Primary and secondary educational institution guidelines. [no date]: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/re-open-saskatchewan-plan/guidelines/primary-and-secondary-educational-institution-guidelines>. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
13. Institut national de santé publique Québec. Schools and teaching environments - COVID-19 preventive measures in the workplace. 2020: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/node/23894>. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
14. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Newfoundland & Labrador public health guidance for K-12 schools. 2020: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/Public-Health-Guidance-for-K-12-Schools.pdf>. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
See: Environmental Measures, page 6; Administrative Measures, page 7

International

15. Ghate S, Parekh BJ, Thapar RK, et al. Indian Academy of Pediatrics guidelines on school reopening, remote learning and curriculum in and after the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Indian Pediatr.* 2020; S097475591600251. [online ahead of print] [PubMed: PM33043889](#)
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See: Section 4 – Implementation in schools, page 12
17. UK Department of Education. Guidance for full opening: schools. 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>. Accessed 2020 Nov 26.
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Review Article

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