

**Vancouver Premier College of Arts and Sciences**  
(DLI: O19274398652)

# **COVID-19 Safety Plan**

**Winter 2021**

As per WorkSafeBC, employers must develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan. Vancouver Premier College of Arts and Science's (**VPCAS**) COVID-19 Safety Plan was developed by following the **six-step** process created by WorkSafeBC to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. In accordance with the order of the provincial health officer, this plan has been posted on campus and on our website at <https://vpcollege.com/covid-19-response/>

## **Step 1: Assessment of risks**

This step involved identification of areas where people gathered at each of the institutions such as classrooms, hallways, student lounge, administration front desk, Learning Resource Center, meeting rooms, board rooms, as well as food courts, restaurants and shopping venues annexed to the Richmond Campus. The **VPC Health and Safety Committee** also identified job tasks and processes where workers are close to one another and/or members of the public as well as shared equipment, appliances and common surfaces such as door handles, light switches and office/classroom furniture.

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways. It can spread in droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. It can also spread if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your face.

The risk of person-to-person transmission increases the closer you come to other people, the more time you spend near them, and the more people you come near.

The risk of surface transmission increases when many people contact the same surface and when those contacts happen over short periods of time.

**VPCAS has involved frontline workers, supervisors, and the joint health and safety committee.**

**VPCAS has identified areas where people gather:**

Classrooms, hallway, washrooms, student lounge, staff lounge, front desk, meeting room, boardroom

**VPCAS has Identified job tasks and processes where workers are close to one another or members of the public:**

Reception area, copy machine area, faculty office, administration area, lounges, front and back entrances

**VPCAS has Identified tools, machinery, and equipment that workers share while working:**

Copy machine, work stations, classroom computers

**VPCAS has Identified surfaces that people touch often:**

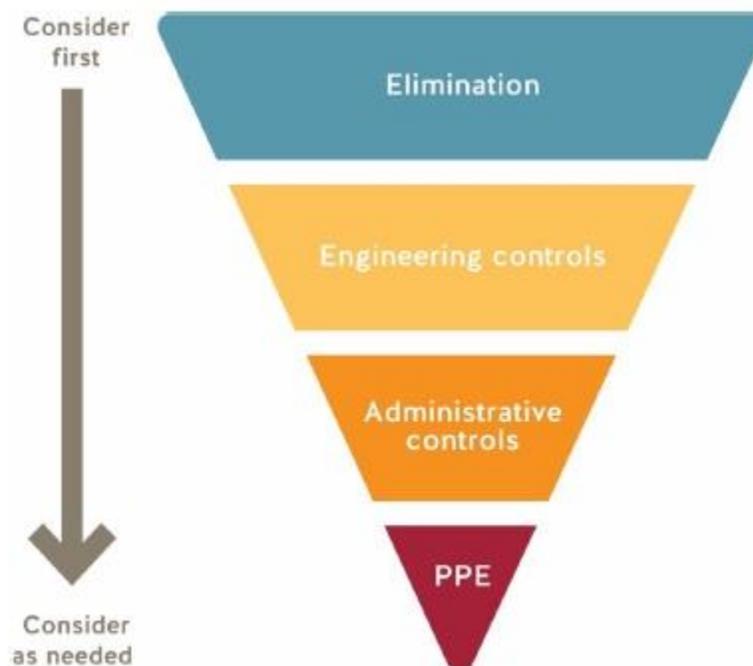
Copy machine, door handles, light switches, desks

*As per the Provincial Health Officer's order (Nov. 9) on limiting social interactions, VPCAS has implemented Active Daily In-person Screening of all onsite workers using the COVID-19 symptom check list that is part of every business restart safety plan. See Appendix 1*

## Step 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risks

The VPCAS Health & Safety Committee has reviewed the industry-specific protocols to minimize the risks of transmission. Implementation of WorkSafeBC protocols to reduce transmission risk involved the utilization of all four mitigation-related measures designed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission including: Elimination; Engineering Controls; Administrative Controls; and, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as outlined below.

Different protocols offer different levels of protection. Wherever possible, VPCAS will use the protocol that offers the highest level of protection.



- First level (elimination): The risk of COVID-19 transmission was substantially eliminated through the development and implementation of an institutional-wide work-from-home policy for employees of the three institutions which significantly reduced the number of on-location employees/students thus reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. We will establish and post occupancy limits for our premises; continue with the work-from-home arrangements, virtual meetings, rescheduling work tasks, stagger start-end times and class breaks, and limiting the number of students and visitors to our campuses; establish and post occupancy limits for common areas such as the student and staff lounges, front desk area, washrooms, corridors and meeting and boardrooms; will implement measures to keep staff and students at least 2 metres apart, wherever possible.
- Second level (engineering controls): in the form of plexi-glass barriers in high traffic areas such as classrooms, Registrar/Administrative Services, and, Student Services. Socially-distanced seating arrangements have also been implemented and touchless hand-sanitizing stations have been installed at location entrances. Hand-sanitizing lotion is also provided outside of washrooms and in all high occupancy areas.

- Third level (administrative controls): implemented by the institutions include posting of occupancy limits on all classrooms and meeting rooms; placement of directional (i.e. one-way) traffic control signage in the hallways; development of reporting and contact tracing procedures in regard to observed or perceived COVID-19 symptoms; education and training that will be provided to all employees, students and others (on location) will include the institutional Safety Plan, COVID-19 protocols and, policies and procedures including the selection and use of Personal Protection Equipment.
- Fourth level (PPE): Face masks will be required for admittance to both locations and participation in work and program related activities will require the wearing of an approved mask. A video illustrating what masks are appropriate for employees, students and others (on location) as well as the fitting of the various masks will be made available as part of the COVID-19 Safety Plan. If an employee, student or member of the public does not have a mask, a face mask will be provided to that person by the institution(s) for their use in that location. Cleaning and disinfectant protocols have also been provided to certified contract cleaners.

### Step 3: Develop Policies

Development of policies that will support the mitigation of COVID-19 transmission risk involved the development of new Covid-19 Safety Policy which requires mandatory employee, student and institutional community member compliance with requirements under the Workers Compensation Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, and, orders and/or directives issued from the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), the Ministry of Health, Provincial Health Officer and/or Vancouver Coastal Health as well as the Public Health Agency of Canada. We have developed policies to manage our campuses, including policies around who can be on campus, how to address illness that arises on campus, and how staff and students can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions.

Our policies ensure that students and staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 are prohibited from campuses.

- Anyone who has had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 10 days. Symptoms include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new muscle aches or headache.
- Anyone directed by Public Health to self-isolate.
- Anyone who has arrived from outside of Canada must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- Visitors are prohibited or limited on campuses.
- First aid attendants have been provided OFAA protocols for use during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We have a work-from-home policy
- Ensure workers have the training and strategies required to address the risk of violence that may arise as students and members of the public adapt to restrictions or modifications to the campuses. Ensure an appropriate violence prevention program is in place.

Our policy addresses workers who may start to feel ill at work. It includes the following:

- Sick workers should report to first aid, even with mild symptoms.
- Sick workers should be asked to wash or sanitize their hands, provided with a mask, and isolated. We will direct the worker to go straight home. The worker should consult the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool, or call 8-1-1 for further guidance related to testing and self-isolation.
- If the worker is severely ill (e.g., difficulty breathing, chest pain), call 9-1-1
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces that the ill worker has come into contact with.

## **Step 4: Develop communication plans and training**

Development of a Communication Plan for Vancouver Premier College of Arts and Science involved developing the various communication strategies, tactics and channels that were to be used to inform and update the VPC community with respect to COVID-19. This included development of main theme messaging with respect to accessing COVID-19 related information which includes existing health and safety related plans, policies and procedures; COVID-19 education and training sessions; COVID-19 related workplace safety checklists; additional services and supports being offered to facilitate a smooth transition to return to location for employees and students which includes reporting procedures for COVID-19 symptoms.

Decisions with respect to the communication channels (such as website page, internal signage, social media, email and/or student information system) to be used for various types of communications, updates and messages was also required. In terms of quality assurance of communications, ensuring that the content of all messages is consistent with provincial and local public health advice, and, provided immediately to instructors, staff, students and visitors upon receipt will ensure that the institutional community is kept informed in real time. To ensure the consistency of communications, COVID-19 risk mitigation reminder messaging is to be incorporated in all institutional, department and initiative-based communications included on meeting agendas.

We will ensure that everyone entering our campuses, including students and staff, knows how to keep themselves safe while on campus.

- We have a training plan to ensure everyone is trained in workplace policies and procedures.
- All workers will receive policies for staying home when sick.
- Signage will be posted around the campuses, including occupancy and effective hygiene practices
- We will post signage at the main entrance indicating who is restricted from entering the premises, including students, staff and visitors with symptoms.
- Health and Safety committee members, frontline workers will be trained on monitoring the campus to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.
- Communications to be centralized through the Director of Operations.

## **Step 5: Monitor workplace and update plans as necessary**

As referred to above, the development of the Monitor Workplace and Update Plans involved the institutional recognition and communication that effective monitoring of the workplace, as it relates to COVID-19 infection, is a shared responsibility among all employees, students and visitors. Furthermore, due to the contagious nature of the virus, reporting of any COVID-19 symptoms should be done through the COVID-19 Update page on the tri-institutional website, telephone number (604-547-1094) or email ([Be-Safe@vpcollege.com](mailto:Be-Safe@vpcollege.com)) respectively. Reporting of any and all observed or perceived COVID-19 symptoms while in an institutional location should not be done in person under any circumstances as this well-meaning and preventative action will increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission for both the sender and receiver of the message.

Notwithstanding the shared responsibility for COVID-19 monitoring, in the event that a COVID-19 policy, procedure and/or practice is(are) deemed to be ineffective, or, should additional policies, procedures and/or practices be required to effectively mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, members of the various institutional Health and Safety Committee(s) will revise the policy(ies), procedure(s) or practice(s) to improve its/their effectiveness, and/or, to develop new policies, procedures or practices, as may be required in the institutional circumstance, to mitigate COVID-19 transmission risk.

If we identify a new area of concern, or if it seems like something isn't working, the Health and Safety Committee will take steps to update our plans, policies and procedures.

- We have a plan in place to monitor risks. We made changes to our policies and procedures as necessary.
- Staff will know who to go to with health and safety concerns.
- When resolving safety issues, we will involve joint health and safety committees or worker health and safety representatives.

## **Step 6: Assess and address risks from resuming operations**

Assessing and addressing risks associated with re-opening involved developing an understanding of the risk level associated with COVID-19 transmission as it relates to Vancouver Premier College of Arts and Science. Provincial experience with COVID-19 has confirmed that while it is difficult to accurately estimate COVID-19 transmission risk due to the numerous contributing factors that have been identified as potential enablers of transmission, assessment information adapted from WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Guideline G6.34-6 has been used by a number of organizations to effectively categorize the transmission risk based on an employee's potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus. The conclusions arrived at from this common sense risk categorization approach include that high risk employees are typically those who have frequent exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Based on this experiential/common sense COVID-19 risk categorization approach, Vancouver Premier College of Arts and Science employees are not considered to be at high-risk for COVID-19 exposure. These lower risk employees should focus their efforts on adopting hygiene best practices such as frequent hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette, mask use, physical (social) distancing

and, on cleaning and disinfecting high touch and traffic areas in both their home and institutional work environments.

Notwithstanding the above, the institutions have developed an implementation plan in regard to the operationalization of the COVID-19 Safety Plans inclusive of emphasizing the importance of vigilant on-going monitoring and reporting of risks associated with COVID-19 transmission as a high priority for all employees, students and visitors at VPCAS. Furthermore, given the international orientation of VPCAS's student enrollment, effectively mitigating COVID-19 transmission risk for incoming international students will not only require strict adherence to the COVID-19 protocols as outlined in the respective Institutional Safety Plans but also, the monitoring of the international jurisdictions from which VPCAS students are being recruited. This precautionary approach will involve the monitoring of the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases being reported, any/all jurisdictional travel advisories and any/all international COVID-19 updates issued by international health agencies (WHO) as well as Canadian government authorities.

As our campuses have not been fully operating for a period of time during the COVID-19 pandemic, we will manage risks arising from restarting operations.

- We have a training plan for new staff
- We have a training plan for staff taking on new roles or responsibilities
- We have a training plan around changes to our facilities
- We have reviewed the start-up requirements for equipment that have been out of use.

# Questions and Answers

**Q: What if a staff or student is feeling ill while on campus? What are the protocols?**

**A:** Prior to entering VPCAS, all staff and students are required to do a self-check located on at <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en> or through the BC Covid-19 App which can be downloaded at <https://bc.thrive.health/>. Staff or students who show signs of the Covid-19 symptoms should leave campus immediately, conduct a self-assessment, monitor their symptoms and seek emergency care if required. These staff or students should assist VPCAS with identifying any person(s) with whom they came into contact with to facilitate contact tracing and awareness notification. If they require information about Covid-19, they should **call 8-1-1**. If they feel ill with Covid-19 symptoms, they should call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Should the staff or student feel ill or have COVID-19 symptoms, VPCAS will advise them to leave the VPCAS's campus immediately and return to their home as soon as possible so they are able to monitor their symptoms. If the symptoms persist, they should call the local health authority or their doctor's office in order to get further direction. Subsequently, VPCAS will implement contact tracing to advise any students or staff about the symptoms identified in order to ensure anyone contacted by this person can begin self-assessing and symptom monitoring. In the event that any of the contacted people detect any symptoms, they will also be advised to leave VPCAS's campus immediately and similarly contact tracing of that individual will be undertaken in order to prevent spread. Also, any surfaces/work stations that were touched by the reporting individuals will be immediately sanitized by cleaners who are familiar with the Covid-19 cleaning protocols. (See Appendix 2)

Faculty, staff and students with questions or concerns about institutional exposure to COVID-19 can call WorkSafeBC's Prevention Information Line at 604-276-3100 in the Lower Mainland (toll-free within B.C. at 1-888-621-SAFE). Prevention officers will provide answers and, if required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at VPCAS.

**Q: Should students and staff be wearing masks at all times?**

**A:** Yes, if they are in shared spaces such as classrooms and meeting rooms; or common areas such as entrances, hallways or washrooms.

**Q: Will there be any cleaning and disinfecting during regular school hours?**

**A:** Yes, VPCAS will continue to have daily cleaning after hours with our contractor, but will also have a custodian to follow cleaning protocols throughout the day.

**Q: I have more questions but where can I find more information?**

**A:** The Covid-19 Safety Plan will include links to resources as found on: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/aest\\_postsecgoforwardguidelines.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/aest_postsecgoforwardguidelines.pdf) or; at VPC's website at <https://vpcollege.com/covid-19-response/>

# Resources

- [Self-Quarantine on return to BC](#)
- [COVID-19 A guide to reducing the risk](#)
- [COVID-19 Considerations for a Trauma Informed Response for Work Settings \(Organizations/Schools/ Clinics\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Health and Safety: Cleaning and disinfecting](#)
- [COVID-19 Health and Safety: Designing effective barriers](#)
- [COVID-19 Health and Safety: Selecting and using masks](#)
- [COVID-19 Psychological First Aid Service: Information and Signup](#)
- [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)
- [COVID-19 Staying Well in Uncertain Times](#)
- [Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: Cover coughs and sneezes](#)
- [Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: Entry check for visitors](#)
- [Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: Entry check for workers](#)
- [Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: Handwashing](#)
- [Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: How to use a mask](#)
- [Inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic: Frequently asked questions for employers](#)
- [Managing COVID-19 Stress, Anxiety and Depression](#)
- [Mental Health and COVID-19](#)
- [Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- [OFAA protection during the COVID-19 pandemic: A guide for employers and occupational first aid attendant](#)
- [What employers should do](#)
- [Process safety risks in hazardous facilities due to COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Setting up, organizing and working comfortably in your home workspace](#)
- [Taking Care of Your Mental Health \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Working from home: A guide to keep workers health and safe](#)

# Appendix 1

## Active Health Screening Questionnaire

To comply with the Public Health Officer's orders of November 7th, 2020 all staff and contractors entering a workplace within the Vancouver Coastal or Fraser Health Region must answer the following questions prior to entering the workplace. Active Health Screening is only to be completed by staff based on the Public Health Officer's orders, not clients or public. Some of these questions may sound personal but they are important to help ensure the health and safety of all of us in the workplace:

### 1. Are you experiencing any of the following new on set symptoms?

Fever

Fatigue

New or worsening cough

Muscle aches

Stuffy or runny nose

Loss of appetite

Sore throat/painful swallowing

Chills

Difficulty breathing

Headache

Diarrhea

Loss of sense of smell

Nausea and/or vomiting

Yes No

### 2. Have you traveled outside of Canada - including the United States within the last 14 days?

Yes No

### 3. Have you been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis within the last 14 days?

Yes No

### 4. Have you been told to self-isolate in accordance with Public Health directives?

Yes No

## **Appendix 2**

### **In the event of an outbreak**

VPCAS's plan for robust case management in the event of an outbreak is guided by the Public Health Agency of Canada's "Guidance for post-secondary institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic" located at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/covid-19-guidance-post-secondary-institutions-during-pandemic.html>

In the event of an outbreak, VPCAS will:

- Work with the local PHA to determine whether an outbreak should be declared, how to implement mitigation measures, and how the outbreak will be monitored by the PHA.
- Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation. Get up-to-date information from the PHA. Regularly provide accessible and actionable information to people who are accessing your campus in accessible ways relevant to the population (e.g., email/text notification, social media, website updates, and signage in classrooms or residences).
- Enhance education for students/faculty/staff/guests about ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including physical distancing and other personal practices, as well as instructions of what to do if symptoms occur and where to access testing.
- Prohibit non-essential visitors from accessing campus spaces, including student residences, gym facilities, food courts, etc.
- Enhance active (asking culturally safe questions about health status) and passive (accessible signage, voluntary reporting) screening activities of students/faculty/staff.
- Increase access to hand hygiene stations/hand sanitizer dispensers and reminders about cough etiquette for all individuals accessing campus.
- Increase cleaning frequency of highly used spaces, high-touch surfaces and objects (lounges/common areas, dining halls/food service areas, desks, doorknobs, electronics, elevator buttons, and faucets).
- Monitor or connect with students/faculty/staff who may be more likely to be exposed to the COVID-19 virus and those at risk of more severe disease or outcomes (e.g., older adults, people of any age with chronic medical conditions, people of any age who are immunocompromised, and people living with obesity), and reach out to them regularly. Ensure that they are informed about the symptoms of COVID-19 and how they may protect themselves through physical distancing and hand hygiene. When possible consider single rooms for those living in residences who are high risk due to chronic medical conditions.