

16 February 2022

Public Health Protocols Loosening in British Columbia

Hello again. I would like to share with you the gist of a message sent to students and their families this morning by my colleague Ty Pile, Vice President of Administration and Operations.

Dear Students and Community,

As many of you may have read or heard, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) yesterday announced the [lifting of many COVID-19 restrictions](#) in B.C. as long as masks and vaccine certificates are used. The order will go into effect at the end of today (16 February). A summary of [COVID protocols](#) which are changing and those not changing is below:

Notable Provincial restrictions that are changing

With proof of vaccination and masks, these activities can return to normal.

- No restrictions on indoor and outdoor personal gatherings
- Full capacity allowed for:
 - Indoor and outdoor organized events
 - Indoor events at venues
 - Exercise and fitness, adult sports activities, tournaments and swimming pools
- Full capacity and fewer restrictions in restaurants, bars, pubs and nightclubs:
 - No limits on table size
 - Customers don't have to remain seated
- Dancing is allowed when wearing a mask indoors

Notable Provincial restrictions and safety measures that aren't changing

Restrictions and safety measures that **remain in place** will be reviewed by the PHO in mid-March and again in mid-April.

- Masks required in all indoor public settings
- [Showing proof of vaccination](#) to access many businesses, events and services
- Businesses must have a COVID-19 safety plan

- Restrictions on visitors to long-term care and assisted living facilities
- Restrictions on worship services
- Restrictions on child and youth overnight camps
- Grades kindergarten to 12 and childcare safety guidelines

Students and Off-campus Visits

Pearson's Operations Working Group yesterday unanimously decided to allow students to resume unsupervised, off-campus visits and activities within the Greater Victoria area effective today, 16 February.

The Operations group monitors public health reports to make step-by-step adjustments which allow the resumption of normal activities on campus, including increased access to indoor spaces and expansion of boundaries for unsupervised outdoor and off-campus activities. COVID hospitalizations continue to fall and severe illness from the virus has been mitigated by vaccinations. The B.C. PHO's decision to lift additional restrictions was made to balance ongoing transmission of the virus with a recognition of the mental health and economic toll that restrictions have had on people.

Prior to the Operations meeting, the College queried a senior Public Health official about their perspective on allowing Pearson students take unsupervised visits off campus. Their response: er Victoria, they responded, *I would strongly support moves to normalizing social activities off campus for students in the interest of mental and social well being...[and] I am assuming students will adhere to any existing public health measures such as masking indoors and the current limits on indoor social gatherings outside of campus.*

Off-campus Guidelines

- Students must sign out and sign in using the College's REACH boarding app, indicating destination and estimated return time
- Students should always travel in groups, wear reflective clothing (or arm band) if walking along unlit roads, carry College phone numbers for Houseparents, Health Centre and Dean of Students and review police safety tips at [Be Street Smart](#)
- Students must be back on campus no later than 10:30 p.m.
- Students may request or accept invitations to stay with a Host Family (this includes overnights with visiting family members). The Host Family Coordinator and Houseparents or the Dean of Students must be notified in advance – no exceptions
- Students should always carry their vaccine card (digital or hard copy proof of vaccination) for entry into certain venues such as restaurants

On-campus Guidelines

- Dayrooms are only for use by students in that House as this continues to provide a safe non-masked space for students*
- Masks must be worn inside all indoor spaces on campus. These include all areas provided for the common use of students and staff, including lobbies, hallways, bathrooms, classrooms, laboratories, gyms and other indoor locations where students receive educational instruction, services or programming, and all school vehicles if more than one person is present in the vehicle
- Masks may be removed indoors:
 - To consume food or drink.
 - While participating in a fitness activity or sport organized by Pearson or at a Pearson facility (i.e. the fitness area and pool where mixing of Houses is permitted).
 - To engage in an educational activity such as practicing or playing a wind instrument.
 - If alone in a space
 - If separated by a barrier (divider or cubicle)
 - If delivering a presentation and separated from others by a distance of two or more metres.

**** Wearing of masks is mandatory in common spaces on campus except for House dayrooms which currently remain for the exclusive use of residents of that House. The return of mixed dayrooms will be reviewed by the College Assembly as public health conditions change.***

Students have recently submitted several risk assessments for upcoming proposed activities on campus and we are reminding them that the loosening of restrictions may allow for additional participants or activities such as dancing.

Everyone in our community has sacrificed a lot to get to where we are today. Please remember, the virus has not gone away and the potential for transmission still exists, so we urge everyone to stay vigilant with your personal protocols and to respect each other's personal decisions.

Yours sincerely,



Craig Davis
President and Head of College