

# Cedars Christian School – Sept 2020 Restart Communications Plan

Revised: January 10, 2022

Development of a clear and comprehensive communications plan is an essential component of service planning during a pandemic. Strong lines of direct communication can significantly help to reduce stress and increase trust within the school community.

Independent school authorities should develop and regularly update their communication plans in collaboration with their regional health authority, First Nations, the Metis Nation, Indigenous communities, staff, and community partners as applicable.

**School Name:** Cedars Christian School

**Ministry School Number:** 5796230

**Contact Name:** Shane Nelson, *Principal*

**Contact Email:** shanen@cedars.bc.ca

## ROUTINE COMMUNICATIONS

1. Process for communicating with parents/caregivers, including those who are homeschooling. Include the name and position of the person primarily responsible for developing and managing communications.

Cedars maintains a contact list for parents/caregivers of students in our PreK-12 school system and those registered with our school as homeschool families. Constant Contact email communications are used for direct communications with parent/caregivers. E-newsletters are used for weekly updates, and our school webpage and Cedars Updates Facebook page are used for real-time updates and repositories of past communications and resource links.

The Principal, Shane Nelson, works with our lead office administrative assistant, Coleen Hein, in delivery and management of these communications. The school administration team and Board provide input to the Principal in the development of all communications.

2. Guidance given to staff regarding the sharing of information beyond that which pertains to the individual student or class learning.

The Principal pre-shares key communiques that will be shared with the community at large, so that messaging is consistent and so that staff can redirect parent/guardians to these communiques. All key communiques with the community reference Ministry and public health documentation for background and accuracy. A repository of these communiques are housed on our school website's COVID-19 Updates page.

3. Protocols that are in place for responding to inaccurate information circulating within our school community.

Staff are encouraged to inform the Principal of inaccurate information circulating in the school community. Inaccuracies are addressed on our website, in our weekly e-newsletter, or by direct email – depending on the level of urgency discerned by the Board and leadership team.

4. Outline of schedule of direct communications to parents/caregivers and staff.

Cedars is committed to significant, weekly communication in our weekly, Wednesday e-newsletter. Key articles in this newsletter are subsequently linked on our Cedars Updates Facebook page to maximize readership. Communications outside of this cycle are kept to a minimum so that when they occur, they are seen as of particular importance to our community. A special bulletin can be easily emailed and linked to our website and Facebook page, if necessary. Prior to the return to school after breaks (and other significant transitions), we increase the frequency of communications, and may solicit feedback through surveys and direct email. Direct communications through phone and email are followed up in a timely manner to ensure clarity. Our typical office hours are 8am-4pm, Monday to Friday.

5. Thresholds for notifying public health and the school community of *potential activity signals* with respect to communicable disease and protocols for activating *public health and functional school closures*.

A **potential activity signal** occurs when staff and/or student attendance levels reach a predetermined threshold. Current public health thresholds include:

- If overall student absences due to illness is 10% higher than normal
- If more than 25% of a class or grade are absent due to illness
- If a functional school closure is being considered

When a potential activity signal is reached, the school will simultaneously inform our local Medical Health Officer and our school community. Given the size and connectedness of our school community, a *school-wide notice* will be issued for overall and class/grade-based thresholds are reached or surpassed. **NOTE:** A *school-wide notice of "activity" does NOT necessarily mean that a school closure will occur.*

A **functional school closure** will be considered when staff absences reach a level that prevents safe supervision of students and/or meaningful continuity of in-person learning. The following steps are taken in the event of significant staff absences:

1. If staff are sick, our on-call dispatch person is activated to secure a replacement.
2. If no replacement is available, the Principal is notified and internal coverage solutions are activated.
3. If internal coverage is not sufficient for safe supervision of students or meaningful learning continuity, an email will be sent to parents/caregivers to come pick up their children. A functional school closure announcement will also be posted on our building doors, school website, and Cedars Updates Facebook page. The duration of the school closure will be clarified in this announcement.
4. On-site care for children who are not able to be picked up immediately will be provided on the day of the school closure announcement.
5. On-site care will be provided for vulnerable students and children of essential service workers for the duration of the school closure with reduced staff.
6. Day 1 of a functional school closure will be used for staff planning, preparation, and communication with families. No online learning will occur on this day.
7. Online learning will be activated on Day 2 and for the duration of the school closure.
8. School closures will be 3-7 days, based on anticipated time for staff sickness recovery to support in-person learning.
9. Given our K-12 context, with siblings across our elementary and high school, it should be expected that school closures would result in K-12 transition to online learning.

A **public health closure** is a temporary school closure by order of a Medical Health Officer when it is deemed necessary to prevent excessive transmission of a communicable disease. This could be based on student and/or staff absences due to illness. Protocols for online learning and on-site care similar to those used in functional closures would be activated.

6. Indigenous rightsholder input has been requested by SD57, and we have been assured that input significant to our communication processes will be shared with our school leadership team. All community stakeholders have a voice in our school community, and feedback on this plan is welcomed at any time.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING ORIENTATION**

7. Process for clearly and consistently communicating guidelines from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and resources available for information on COVID-19 as needed - including details regarding how infection prevention and exposure control measures are relayed in multiple formats for ease of understanding (e.g., visual representation, videos using sign language, translations, etc.)

Our Communicable Disease Prevention Plan is posted on our COVID-19 Updates webpage ([www.cedars.bc.ca/covidupdates](http://www.cedars.bc.ca/covidupdates)). Updates to this Plan are shared with staff and parents/caregivers by direct email. Following significant revisions, on-site orientations are conducted with staff and students, and virtual Town Hall meetings with parents/caregivers are considered.

Signage will be posted near the two main entrances and in higher traffic areas reiterate our key message of “Give Space & Clean with Care”.

8. Process for early and ongoing health and safety orientation for **staff** includes training on:
  - The risk of exposure to COVID-19 and the signs and symptoms of the disease.
  - Safe work procedures or instruction to be followed, including hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette.
  - How to report an exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Changes made to work policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID- 19 pandemic and keep records of that training.

All staff will participate in an on-site, in-person orientation following longer breaks and ahead of significant transitions.

Weekly Monday morning and Wednesday afternoon, all staff meetings, will include a component for health and safety updates.

Minutes for all staff meetings are taken and shared electronically with staff. Significant updates to health and safety will be summarized and distributed via email. All OHS meeting minutes are posted on the staff room Health and Safety bulletin board.

9. Process for early and ongoing health and safety orientation **parents/caregivers**.

Virtual Town Hall meetings are hosted by the Principal prior to the start of the school year, and often following significant transitions during the school year. Guidelines related to communicable disease prevention will be reiterated in elementary class start-of-year letters, on field trip forms, and in volunteer orientations.

10. Process for early and ongoing health and safety orientation for **students**.

Elementary students will be given an on-site orientation by their classroom teacher in the first week of classes, and upon return to school following significant transitions. A-block high school teachers will do likewise for our older students. Key messages around health and safety will also be reinforced with vice principal meetings in the middle of the first week back, and with all new students.

Signage and daily protocols with respect to “*Give Space, Clean with Care*” will further reinforce key health and safety messaging.

11. Cedars Christian School has an active, Joint Health and Safety Committee, as per WorkSafeBC guidelines, to identify protocols for our workplace. This committee meets at least monthly, and more frequently during times of transition between restart stages and investigations.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH MEDIA**

12. Name of the main spokesperson for our school: **Shane Nelson, *Principal***

13. Name of secondary spokesperson (if applicable): **Jason Oliver, *Board Chair***

14. Protocols for screening, directing, and responding to media inquiries.

All key messaging to the media will be done through the Principal or Board Chair. Inquiries will be directed to the Principal.

Inquiries made by the media regarding suspected or confirmed cases or outbreaks of COVID-19 - **including public health or functional closures** - will be directed to the regional health authority for response.

The Ministry of Education will be informed of significant events and associated communications to school communities related to COVID-19 by email.