

# SELKIRK COLLEGE'S COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PLAN

2023



**Initial Communicable Disease Plan**  
**October 2023, Version 3**



Informational signpost with illuminated text, including the Selkirk College logo at the bottom.



# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
Scope .....	4
Prevent .....	4
Identify .....	5
Plan .....	5
Respond .....	5
Resources .....	6
Appendix A .....	7

## Introduction

Selkirk College's *Communicable Disease Plan* is designed to promote the health and safety of college employees and students by providing information that can be used to prevent the contraction and spread of communicable diseases and the appropriate response to a communicable disease outbreak. **A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another.**

Health & Safety, in conjunction with Human Resources and Communications, Marketing & Advancement, will alert the campus community when there is a communicable disease threat affecting members of the college community.

The *Communicable Disease Plan* guides college communicable disease prevention, mitigation and response activities. In the event of an emergency, Selkirk College will work with the Interior Health Authority; notify the college community of the emergency; take actions to protect the health and safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors; and provide additional guidance if necessary.

## Scope

Communicable diseases falling within the scope of this Plan are those typically caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites and normally spread through direct or indirect human contact or through the consumption of contaminated food/water. Examples of communicable diseases **include but are not limited to:**

- Common Cold
- Coronavirus
- Hepatitis A
- Norovirus
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcal Meningitis
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Tuberculosis

## Prevent

**Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission in the workplace.** Vaccines, antibiotics, antivirals, innate immunity and/or acquired immunity can provide some protection against certain communicable diseases. Not all communicable diseases are treatable, nor are current treatments guaranteed to protect against a communicable disease. Therefore, **it is important to limit the spread of a communicable disease** before it has the potential to cause serious illness/disease by **implementing these additional measures:**

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.
- Use proper cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces.
- Practice a healthy lifestyle: exercise, eat a balanced diet and get sufficient sleep.
- Handle and prepare food safely: keep foods at a correct temperature, cook foods (especially meat) thoroughly, wash produce and observe expiration dates.
- Follow universal precautions when working with blood-borne pathogens.
- Avoid public places, work or school when sick to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
- Maintain appropriate immunizations and vaccinations, based on the region in which you live and work, and your exposure.

Faculty and staff should familiarize themselves with the health benefits available through their Selkirk College benefits plan.

For more information, visit [Benefits \(selkirk.ca\)](https://www.selkirk.ca/benefits).

## Identify

**The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level or within the workplace.** Recognizing the signs and symptoms of a communicable disease and understanding the modes of transmission are the first steps in reducing the incidence of disease associated with communicable diseases. Signs and symptoms will vary depending on the disease, but common characteristics associated at the onset of most communicable diseases typically include fever and other flu-like symptoms, such as: achiness, upset stomach, fatigue, fever and headaches. When travelling abroad, be aware of communicable disease threats; certain communicable diseases are endemic to certain regions of the world.

## Plan

It is important to have a plan in place within your unit or department to respond to staffing and other business issues that may arise during a communicable disease emergency or whenever employees are unable to attend work due to illness. A unit plan should:

- Designate employees who will work during a communicable disease emergency, either onsite or at an alternate location (including home).
- Cross-train staff to provide levels of backup for critical positions.
- Develop telework agreements with those staff who may have to work from home or an alternate location.
- Create a working group to discuss other potential department-specific issues that may arise during an emergency and prepare for them (e.g., the impact of a communicable disease on a conference or other planned event, the potential need for ad hoc telework for those whose symptoms have subsided and may want to begin working again but cannot yet return to the workplace).

## Respond

The following procedures should be followed whenever a communicable disease emergency, such as a regional communicable disease outbreak, pandemic or public health emergency, is declared by local, provincial or national officials. For all other routine, seasonal or individual health issues, consult your healthcare provider. Routine, seasonal and individual health issues DO NOT need to be reported to college officials unless advised to do so by a healthcare provider.

### EMPLOYEES

Faculty or staff who are diagnosed with a communicable disease or are showing signs or symptoms of a communicable disease should:

- Call 811 for more information and seek medical attention if necessary.
- Inform their supervisor, Health & Safety and Human Resources of their condition or diagnosis and relay any pertinent information from their healthcare provider.
- **Support staff and students who have signs and symptoms of a communicable disease (e.g., fever or chills, coughing, diarrhea) so they can avoid being at the workplace or school when sick.**
- **Stay home when sick and avoid close contact with others to the extent possible.**
  - Do not return to work or school until advised to do so by a healthcare professional or, in the absence of medical consultation, do not return to work for the duration of the illness and **24-hours after symptoms abate.**
  - Notify supervisor.
  - Record time away from work as sick leave.

- To limit the spread of communicable disease, avoid travelling when sick, unless otherwise deemed appropriate by a healthcare professional.
- Use antibiotics and antivirals appropriately and exactly as prescribed for the full duration of the prescription—do not self-medicate or share medicines with others.
- Maintain awareness of the situation and the progression and nature of the communicable disease emergency by monitoring reliable media outlets.
- Faculty should alternate teaching schedules to avoid cancellation of class when possible.

### SUPERVISORS

Supervisors who become aware of an employee under their supervision who exhibits communicable disease symptoms or is diagnosed with a communicable disease must not release the employee's name, identifying information or condition to other employees. All employee healthcare concerns must be forwarded to Human Resources. Supervisors and employees can contact Human Resources with any questions or concerns they may have regarding workplace issues surrounding communicable disease.

### STUDENTS

A student who is diagnosed with a communicable disease or is showing signs or symptoms of a communicable disease should:

- Call 811 for more information and seek medical attention from their primary care provider.
- Stay at home or within their residence room when sick and avoid close contact with others to the extent possible.
  - Do not return to class or work until advised to do so by a healthcare professional or for the duration of the illness and 24-hours after symptoms abate.
  - Notify instructors, supervisor and family as necessary.
- To limit the spread of a communicable disease, avoid travelling when sick, unless otherwise deemed appropriate by a healthcare professional.

- Use antibiotics and antivirals appropriately and exactly as prescribed for the full duration of the prescription—do not self-medicate or share medications with others.
- Maintain awareness of the situation and the progression and nature of the communicable disease by monitoring reliable media outlets.

### RETURNING TO WORK OR SCHOOL

Prior to returning to work or school, students and employees should take precautions to prevent spreading a communicable disease by **ensuring that symptoms have passed**. Remain at home if contagious, and, if necessary, consult a healthcare professional for guidance or clearance prior to returning to work or school. During a college-wide communicable disease outbreak, a written statement indicating that students or employees may return to work or school from an attending physician or primary care provider may be required before returning to the college.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

All student and employee medical information is treated as private and confidential and will be handled in compliance with legal requirements and professional ethical standards.

## Resources

For additional information about a specific communicable disease, including symptoms, prevention, treatment and communicable disease outbreak, please visit:

- BCCDC Communicable Disease Control Manual: [Communicable Disease Control Manual \(bccdc.ca\)](https://www.bccdc.ca)
- Interior Health Communicable Disease Control and Prevention: [Communicable Disease Control \(interiorhealth.ca\)](https://www.interiorhealth.ca)
- Your personal healthcare provider(s) or physician.

## APPENDIX A:

### Higher Potential Diseases at Selkirk College

Name	Vaccine Preventable?	Description of Symptoms
Measles (Rubella)	Yes	Symptoms: high fever, cough, runny nose, red/watery eyes, tiny white spots (Koplik spots) in mouth, rash Transmission: coughing and sneezing; virus can live up to two hours in contaminated air or on a surface
Meningitis	Yes	<b>BACTERIAL</b> Symptoms: fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, confusion Transmission: germs spread person-to-person (depends on type of bacteria)  <b>VIRAL</b> Symptoms: fever, headache, stiff neck, sensitivity to bright light, sleepiness or trouble waking up, nausea, irritability, vomiting, lack of appetite, lethargy Transmission: caused by other viruses like mumps, measles, influenza, etc.
Mumps	Yes	Symptoms: fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, swollen/tender salivary glands approximately 16–18 days after infection Transmission: coughing, sneezing or talking; sharing items; touching contaminated objects
Norovirus	No	Symptoms: diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, stomach pain Transmission: contaminated food or drink, touching contaminated surfaces and then putting fingers in mouth, direct contact with someone who is infected
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	Yes	Symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties, loss of smell, sore throat, headache Transmission: person-to-person via droplets, coughing, sneezing, or talking; sharing items; touching contaminated objects
Influenza	Yes	Symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle/body aches, headaches, fatigue, sometimes vomiting and diarrhea Transmission: person-to-person via droplets
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	Yes	Symptoms: fever; tiredness; loss of appetite; headache; itchy, fluid-filled blisters Transmission: touching or breathing in the virus particles from the blisters

301 Frank Beinder Way,  
Castlegar, BC V1N 4L3  
*phone* **250.365.7292**  
*toll free* **1.888.953.1133**  
*email* **info@selkirk.ca**