

# P-12 Education Sector Readiness Plan: Requirements to Host International and Domestic Students from Outside of Nova Scotia

## Introduction

Public and private P-12 schools in Nova Scotia are now permitted to accept students under their custodial care, so long as the school meets the specific requirements found within this document. Any domestic or international student coming to Nova Scotia must be prepared to be in mandatory quarantine (self-isolation) for 14 days upon arrival in Nova Scotia. It is the responsibility of the school to facilitate this safety measure.

## Background

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) maintains a list of provinces and territories that are deemed ready to accept new international students in the P-12 education sector based upon recommendations from the specific province and territory, including private and public schools (effective October 20, 2020). Canadian Border Service agents will be using this approved list to determine the admissibility of an international student into Canada.

IRCC requires the P-12 education sector to be treated as a whole, per province, not by institution. To be included on the IRCC list of schools for Nova Scotia, all P-12 education institutions in Nova Scotia wishing to accept international students must meet the minimum requirements provided in this document and the requirements of the Federal Quarantine Act.

Terminology differs between the Federal Quarantine Act and the Nova Scotia Health Protection Act. For ease of use of this document, the term 'mandatory quarantine', and all the requirements of said quarantine, unless otherwise noted within this document, apply to all students from outside Nova Scotia, unless otherwise exempt (see Exemptions section, page 5).

## Expectations of Public and Private Schools

In public schools, the Nova Scotia International Student Program (NSISP) has been designated for the development and implementation of the quarantine plan for all NSISP participants attending public schools.

The development and implementation of the quarantine plan for private schools lies with the Head of School for each registered private school wishing to enroll international students or Canadian students from outside of Nova Scotia.

The NSISP and individual private schools must ensure compliance with the requirements listed in this document and any future updates to this document or from Public Health. The most current version of this document can be found on the following webpage: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/backtoschool/resources>

This document is to be used in conjunction with the following guidance documents when developing their quarantine plans:

- Federal COVID-19 guidance for schools Kindergarten to Grade 12: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>
- Federal Guidance for post-secondary institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/covid-19-guidance-post-secondary-institutions-during-pandemic.html>
- Nova Scotia's Back to School Plan: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/back-to-school-plan.pdf>

Private schools/NSISP plans must be submitted to Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) for review and Schools/NSISP must have their quarantine plans available at any site where quarantine is occurring.

International students and/or domestic students arriving from outside of Nova Scotia must have custodial arrangements in place. The custodial arrangements are not being replaced by requirements of this document, rather, they will be augmented by the requirements outlined below.

The school will:

- Work with the school community to ensure their readiness to welcome students from outside Nova Scotia.
- Actively promote in the school community (including virtually) reliable and accurate messages about COVID-19, including who is at higher risk of severe illness and messaging around stigma.
- Ensure families are provided with detailed information about what the student's day will look like during quarantine with clear, thorough and specific information about meal planning, exercise, social interaction,

school work (if any) and the supports that will be available should the student struggle with the isolation. It should be stressed to parents and students that the student will spend the majority of time alone for the 14-day quarantine period.

- Ensure homestay families are aware of the challenges facing students and the education system due to COVID-19, and the expectations/results of schools moving to Scenario 2 (Blended/Partial In-School Learning) or Scenario 3 (Fully Online Learning) of the Back to School Plan or of a student being deemed a “close contact” of a positive COVID-19 case.

### **Liaising with Nova Scotia Health Authority Public Health Officials**

Nova Scotia Health Authority Public Health (NSHA-PH) is responsible for contact tracing and will lead any efforts if a case is identified. The school will assist NSHA-PH with these efforts when requested, including providing information and access to faculty, staff and/or students as needed. In the event of any COVID-19 cases for which NSHA-PH identified an exposure related to the school, NSHA-PH will work with the private school/NSISP on a response and communication plan. To ensure the private school/NSISP can provide the most detailed and accurate information as possible, private schools/NSISP are to maintain records of all student whereabouts, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Room assignments
- Washroom assignments
- Names and contact information of individuals who delivered items to student rooms
- Daily staff lists
- Outdoor activity cohorts
- Chaperones and their charges
- Any in-person interactions between a quarantining student and other individuals
- Vehicle trip passenger lists
- All flight and accommodation details

The above is not an exhaustive list. Private schools/NSISP must ensure they keep sufficient records so that they can tell NSHA-PH exactly who could be identified as a close contact in the event of a positive COVID-19 case.

Private schools/NSISP will be required to submit reports and/or information, as requested and as necessary, to:

- NSHA-PH,
- EECD; or
- Any other department / agency deemed necessary by NSHA-PH or EECD.

### **Prior to Arrival**

The school must obtain the travel and accommodation details for submission on the Flight and Accommodation report regarding the confirmed arrival date/time in Nova Scotia of the student that will be under their custodial care and arrange transportation to the quarantine site. (See Flight and Accommodation report).

***All students and parents must be informed of the following important information prior to arrival in Nova Scotia:***

- The student and any accompanying family members will be subject to a 14-day mandatory quarantine upon arrival in Nova Scotia.
- Information and resources about the public health measures put in place by the school and Nova NSHA-PH.
- The need to monitor for symptoms before, during, and after their arrival in Nova Scotia. If they are ill, they should stay home/avoid travel.
- How to stay safe, protect others and help reduce the spread of COVID-19 by:
  - Physical distancing
  - Frequent hand hygiene
  - Practicing respiratory etiquette (e.g. cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough/ sneeze or use the inside of your elbow)

- Frequent environmental cleaning (e.g. cleaning of high touch surfaces and objects) at least twice daily, more if the area is high traffic
  - Wearing non-medical masks (NMM) (For non-medical mask requirements: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/masks/>)
  - Avoiding close contact with populations at high-risk for severe COVID-19 disease and outcomes (e.g. older adults, individuals who are immunocompromised and/or with underlying medical conditions)
  - This information must make it clear that they need to follow these practices upon their arrival, during, and after their mandatory 14-day quarantine period
- Regarding protocols if the student is diagnosed with COVID-19 during their mandatory quarantine. Such a diagnosis would likely result in the extension of the quarantine period (length to be determined by Public Health).

## International Students

- International student must quarantine for 14-days upon reaching their final destination in Canada, mandated by law under the Federal Quarantine Act;
- The federal requirement is to have a 14-day mandatory quarantine plan in place prior to arrival. The school will provide support in the development of these plans.
- Information on the Government of Canada's ArriveCan Application and strong encouragement of the student to use this application: (<https://arrivecan.cbsa-asfc.cloud-nuage.canada.ca/confidentialit%C3%A9>)
- Access to the publication by IRCC titled "COVID-19; A guide for International Students in Canada Arriving from Abroad" is available for schools, parents, and students. ([https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/publications-manuals/3075\\_Covid-19-Guide-for-International-Students-factsheet\\_EN\\_FINAL\\_HR.pdf](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/publications-manuals/3075_Covid-19-Guide-for-International-Students-factsheet_EN_FINAL_HR.pdf))
- International students can reference the Nova Scotia COVID website as a resource: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>.

## Domestic Students from Outside Nova Scotia

- Domestic students from outside of Nova Scotia must quarantine for 14-days as per the Nova Scotia Health Protection Act unless they are otherwise exempt.

### EXEMPTION

**Effective July 3, 2020:** Any student travelling to Nova Scotia from New Brunswick, Newfoundland or Prince Edward Island and have not travelled outside of Atlantic Canada for 14-days prior to entering Nova Scotia is exempt from the requirement to quarantine for the 14-day period. They are within what is known as the “Atlantic Bubble”. ***This exemption will remain in place until otherwise directed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Nova Scotia.***

- Domestic students can reference the Nova Scotia COVID website as a resource: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>.

## Transportation

The school must provide or arrange transportation for students (and co-arriving immediate family members) arriving from outside of Nova Scotia; as such, the school must ensure that:

- Masks must be worn at all times, unless a student is exempt due to another medical condition (<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/masks/>). Students will practice physical distancing as much as possible during transportation, as well as upon arrival to their accommodation (e.g., occupancy limits in vehicles/elevators/stairwells, sitting in the back of a vehicle, blocking of seats in a bus/shuttle, specific entrances/exits). Where possible, windows should be open in vehicles transporting students from airport to accommodations.
- Adequate environmental cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces is performed in transportation vehicles as well as when the student is entering their accommodations.
- Students have access to hand hygiene materials (e.g., soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol) while in transit.
- They outline/describe to students upon arrival how to quarantine safely and the regulations/restrictions related to mandatory quarantine.

- Maintain a vehicle trip passenger list for all travel that includes the date, name of driver, all passengers, and route. These records must be easily available for submission to NSHA-PH should contact tracing be required.

## **Mandatory Quarantine Requirements**

Students (and co-arriving immediate family members) are responsible for on-going self-monitoring and assessment of COVID-19 symptoms and for ensuring their compliance with the Federal Quarantine Act and the Directives of the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Nova Scotia. This includes the mandatory quarantine when arriving in Nova Scotia unless otherwise exempt (see Exemptions, page 5).

A suitable place for mandatory quarantine means a place where students:

- Have access to basic necessities, including water, food, medication and heat during the winter months;
- Are not in a group or community living arrangement;
- Are not sharing washroom facilities unless they are co-arriving immediate family members from the same household arriving together; and
- Are housed at locations that have met the federal requirements for accommodations, including plans to reduce risk for people at risk of more severe disease or outcomes.

To ensure compliance with the 14-day mandatory quarantine, the school must arrange or provide mandatory quarantine accommodations in Nova Scotia for all students (and co-arriving immediate family members) requiring quarantine, regardless of where the student will be living (i.e. a residence or home stay) after they complete their mandatory quarantine period.

The mandatory quarantine location may be in a school operated residence or arranged in third party accommodations such as a hotel. The private schools/NSISP have oversight responsibility and must ensure the student (and co-arriving immediate family members) requiring quarantine is/are monitored and has the necessary supports to complete their mandatory 14-day quarantine successfully.

***For students completing their mandatory quarantine period in a school operated residence, the school must:***

- Assign only one student per room, unless they are co-arriving immediate family members from the same household arriving together, with their own washroom;
- Establish an arrival and move-in schedule and protocols where move-in times are staggered and/or assigned to mitigate risk of transmission within large crowds potentially arriving at the same time. Measures such as physical distancing and the wearing of Non-Medical Masks are enforced during this process;
- Ensure the HVAC system is adjusted to increase fresh air supply and/or encourages students to open windows in their accommodations;
- Ensure disinfection of high touch areas at least two times daily and more frequently in high traffic areas;
- Ensure regular and robust monitoring of mandatory quarantined individuals throughout the 14-day quarantine period for COVID-19 symptoms, general well-being, compliance with mandatory quarantine requirements, with an emphasis on individual COVID-19 infection control practices;
- Will provide school staff who are working where students who are undergoing mandatory quarantine with information about, and encourage to use, the provincial Self-Assessment Test and COVID-19 Self-Assessment Questionnaire <https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/en>;
- Provides custodial services as follows:
  - Students under mandatory quarantine are responsible for their own linen changes and room cleaning to mitigate risks of transmission. Staff should do a no-contact drop-off of new linens, if required, to the students' room and a plastic bag for students to place their old linens in; and
  - When performing duties where they could come into contact with potentially infectious materials (e.g., linens, garbage, food trays), staff must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Staff must perform hand hygiene immediately after handling materials originating from the student in mandatory quarantine.



- Permit the use of designated outdoor spaces for mental health breaks during the student’s mandatory quarantine period only under the following conditions:
  - Students must complete self-screening forms such as the Self-Assessment Test and COVID-19 Self-Assessment Questionnaire prior to using outdoor spaces <https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/> (staff may also perform screening of students prior to leaving their accommodations);
  - Outdoor time must be scheduled, approved and supervised;
  - Students must always wear a Non-Medical Mask when travelling (both indoors and outdoors) to and from designated outdoor or recreational spaces back to their assigned quarantine room;
  - Students must always maintain a distance of 2 metres (6 ft.) from others while travelling to designated outdoor or recreational spaces and while participating in outdoor time;
  - Students may not mix or contact others and outside time is for individual fitness, not team or organized sport. Schools should design opportunities that reflect weather conditions yet maintain separation;
  - Students must wash their hands frequently including before leaving their room/washroom and avoid touching surfaces as much as possible while exiting the building. Students should avoid touching their face, nose, mouth and eyes. Students should also bring their own hand sanitizer with them for use to sanitize hands before re-entering their building;
  - Students may not use any sport equipment or playgrounds;
  - Students must remain within the boundaries of designated outdoor spaces, recreation spaces, and/or identified travel routes at all times; and
  - Students must not block pathways, entrances, or exits and ensure that it is possible for other campus users to pass by with 2 metres (6 ft.) or greater between them.
- Ensure signage is posted to direct foot traffic in potentially congested areas like entry ways;

- Will disinfect using hard surface disinfectants, at least twice daily, frequently touched surfaces (door handles, accessibility buttons, swipe access readers etc.). Heavily trafficked areas should be disinfected more frequently than twice a day;
- Will provide designated space limits to students where appropriate;
- Will ensure staff wear appropriate NMM or face coverings while performing duties;
- Provide students with free and unlimited wi-fi and a laptop, phone, or tablet suitable for communication and internet use should the student not have their own device;
- Organize virtual activities to keep students occupied and engaged during mandatory quarantine;
- Provide onsite chaperones who will ensure the student (and any co-arriving immediate family members) do not leave their designated space;
- Chaperones will check-in with students daily, by video or phone, to make sure they are healthy and to check-up on their mental health. If there are any concerns a student(s) is unwell or is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, chaperones will facilitate the use of the online assessment tool (<https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/en>). If the student requires a test, the chaperone will notify the school or the NSISP, as appropriate; and
- Meals will be delivered by staff to the residents, leaving them outside the room door. The tray/container and utensils will be disposable, and each delivered meal will include a bag for all items to be placed in by the resident for disposal once the meal is consumed. The bag will be placed outside the room for pickup and disposal by school staff.

***For students completing their quarantine period in accommodations arranged in a third-party accommodation, private schools/NSISP must:***

- Ensure any accommodation arrangements made involving a third party includes established comprehensive COVID-19 quarantine protocols that align with public health directives as well as procedures in place for the monitoring of individuals throughout the mandatory 14-day quarantine period for their general well-being;
- Ensure only one student (including co-arriving immediate family members) is assigned per room;

- Ensure that each individual is provided with three meals per day, along with snacks and drinks;
- Ensure the room has adequate toiletries, linens and other supplies for the duration of quarantine period;
- Provide students with free and unlimited wi-fi. (Should the student not have their own device, the school will provide a laptop, phone, or tablet suitable for communication and internet use during the quarantine period.) This equipment is not to be shared with anyone during the mandatory quarantine;
- Organize virtual activities to keep students occupied and engaged during mandatory quarantine;
- Provide onsite chaperones who will ensure the student (and any co-arriving immediate family members) stays within their designated space; and
- Chaperones will check-in with students daily, by video or phone, to make sure they are healthy and to check-up on their mental health. If there are any concerns a student(s) is unwell or is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, chaperones will facilitate the use of the online assessment tool (<https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/en>). If the student requires a test, the chaperone will notify the school or the NSISP, as appropriate.

***Homestays are not acceptable third-party accommodations***

## Health Monitoring During Mandatory Quarantine

The school will require students to self-monitor during their mandatory quarantine period and provide information to support this, including <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/symptoms-and-testing/>.

Students who become unwell or develop symptoms should be directed to complete the online assessment (<https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/en>) with support from their chaperone. The chaperone must be included in this process to ensure planning, transportation and accurate contact information is provided to the Assessment Centre. If the assessment determines that the student needs a test, they will be directed to the appropriate Nova Scotia Health region to book an appointment.

The school will transfer the student to the Assessment Centre for their appointment. During transportation to the Assessment Centre, the student must wear a NMM (a **medical** mask is preferred, if available), use proper hand hygiene, and maintain a distance of 2 metres (6 ft.) from others. The driver and chaperone must wear masks and should consider face shields if they cannot maintain the 2 metres (6ft.) distance.

### **In case of a Positive COVID-19 Diagnosis**

When a student receives a positive diagnosis, they transition from being in “mandatory quarantine” to “isolation”.

The private school/NSISP will implement the following processes for a student who has received a positive test result:

- The NSISP, or in the case of a private school a member of the staff, will contact the student’s parents to discuss with them the student’s diagnosis and supports to be provided to the student.
- If the student is staying in residence, they must have a private washroom. If there are other residents assigned to that same washroom, they must be assigned to an alternate washroom.
- Staff will:
  - ensure the washroom is well stocked and sanitized at all times
  - provide janitorial services during the period of the active isolation
  - wear appropriate PPE when conducting their duties concerning the isolation
- Contact tracing will be initiated and coordinated by NSHA-PH.
- Meals will be delivered to the student by staff wearing all appropriate PPE. In addition to PPE, staff will continue perform hand hygiene before and after pick up/disposal of meal trays. Timings for meals will be pre-arranged and left outside the occupied room(s) so that there is no possibility of encountering a student in isolation. The meal tray and utensils will be disposable, and each delivered meal will include a bag for all items to be placed in by the resident for disposal once the meal is consumed. The bag will be placed outside the room for pickup and disposal by custodial staff. An appropriate receptacle will be available outside the room and collected regularly.

- An assortment of snacks and drinks should be delivered to the student's room upon diagnosis and replenished as necessary, so as to limit the number of interactions
- A phone will be provided within the room with all appropriate contacts or, if the student has a phone, with a contact list. This list must include the number of someone available 24/7 to assist the student.
- Use of a medical mask is preferred over a non-medical mask when the student is outside of their room. The student should only be outside of their room to attend the washroom. For more information on masks: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/masks/>.
- A student who has tested positive must remain in isolation until they are determined to be recovered by NSHA PH. All individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 will receive a letter confirming their recovery once they have been deemed recovered by NSHA PH.
- Note: schools should be prepared for late diagnosis and the continuation of quarantining. If a student is diagnosed with COVID-19 late in their quarantine their quarantine will be extended until the student is deemed to be recovered by NSPH-PH, this will likely be at least an additional 10 days.

## Post Quarantine Requirements

The school will continue to support students after completion of their mandatory 14-day quarantine period.

This includes offering mental and physical health supports, anti-racism and COVID-19 stigma supports (<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid19-stigma-guide.pdf>), and mitigation of social barriers to support their compliance with individual COVID-19 infection control practices.

Any messaging and information provided to students should continue to be linguistically and culturally appropriate.

Schools and the NSISP must ensure that their plans for students who contract COVID-19 through transmission in the community, school, or homestay are up to date with the most current guidelines.