



## Mask mandate expanded to include K-3 students

Public Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister of Education Jennifer Whiteside [announced today masks will be required for all students in K-12 schools](#) effective October 4, 2021, expanding the mandate to include kindergarten to Grade 3. As of Monday, all BC students will be required to wear masks while inside a school building, including on buses and at desks.

The K-12 Presidents Council and [CUPE BC have been advocating for a broad K-12 mask mandate this school year](#), both [publicly](#) and at the provincial K-12 Education Steering Committee. CUPE looks forward to continuing working with the BC government and the other stakeholders on the steering committee in monitoring and adapting COVID-19 safety measures during this ever evolving and changing pandemic.

While CUPE welcomes today's announcement, the union is also advocating for additional measures to keep schools clean and healthy, such as reinstating daytime cleaning by custodial staff to reduce the spread of disease through frequently touched surfaces. The extremely positive health benefits that

students, workers, and communities have seen from expanded daytime custodial services during the pandemic must be made permanent.

CUPE will continue advocating for daytime custodial services with school districts, as well as long-term ventilation infrastructure upgrades and rapid testing in schools.

***CUPE strongly recommends vaccinations to all members, as they are crucial to limiting the spread of COVID-19.***

The [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) have been updated to include the new mask requirements and can be found on online on [the BC government website](#).

