COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION POLICY

Acton Academy Victoria | Kindergarten-Grade 4

Campus	4277 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC V8X 1L5
Applies to	Learners, Guides, staff, volunteers, families, visitors, and contractors
Policy owner	Head of School
Effective	October 2026
Review cycle	At least annually and whenever public-health guidance changes

1. Purpose scope and authority

Acton Academy Victoria (AAV) is committed to maintaining a healthy, welcoming, learner-driven environment. This policy documents the routine measures AAV uses to reduce the risk of communicable-disease transmission while protecting dignity, inclusion, mental health, and access to learning for every member of our studio community.

AAV follows the direction of the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), the Provincial Health Officer, Island Health, the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and WorkSafeBC. The Provincial Health Officer or a Medical Health Officer may recommend or order additional, time-limited measures during periods of increased risk. Those measures take precedence over this plan while they are in effect.

In this policy, learners means children enrolled in Kindergarten through our current highest grade; Guides includes the Head Guide and Assistant Guides; and studio refers to AAV learning spaces and the shared learner community.

2. Prevention management principles

- align prevention measures with current public-health guidance and WorkSafeBC requirements;
- use an compassionate and trauma-informed approach that considers mental health and wellness;

- focus supports on individual needs and recognize that communicable diseases can affect people and communities differently;
- engage families, Guides, staff, the facility operator, and community partners in practical local solutions; and
- respect personal prevention choices, medical privacy, and approved accommodations without stigma, bullying, or harassment.

3. Responsibilities

AAV and the Head of School will

- monitor current public-health and workplace guidance and update school practices as required;
- communicate relevant health information and temporary measures to Guides, staff, and families;
- maintain supplies and routines that support hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, cleaning, and safe management of illness;
- support individual health-related choices, including the choice to wear a mask, and
- provide workers with appropriate communication, orientation, training, supplies, and safe-work procedures; and
- contact Island Health or another appropriate authority when guidance or support is required.

Families, learners, Guides, staff, and visitors will

- practise health awareness before coming to campus;
- stay home when sick and unable to participate fully in routine school activities;
- follow hand-hygiene and respiratory-etiquette expectations;
- follow any temporary measures communicated by AAV or required by public health; and
- treat others' personal health choices and medical privacy with respect.

4. Supportive school environment

AAV supports prevention by having adults model healthy practices, helping younger learners as needed, posting age-appropriate reminders, and sharing reliable information from BCCDC, the Provincial Health Officer, Island Health, and other authoritative sources. Individual choices about additional personal practices, will be supported and treated respectfully.

Vaccination information

Vaccines are an important protection against serious outcomes from many communicable diseases, including influenza. Learners and adults are encouraged to remain up to date on vaccines recommended for them. AAV may share evidence-based immunization information and opportunities provided by public health, BCCDC, ImmunizeBC, or Island Health. Personal health and vaccination information will be handled in accordance with applicable privacy requirements.

5. Routine prevention measures

Health awareness and staying home when sick

Before attending campus, individuals should consider whether symptoms of illness would prevent them from participating fully in normal activities. Learners, Guides, staff, volunteers, and visitors who are sick and unable to participate fully should remain home. A diagnosed condition such as seasonal allergies does not, by itself, require absence when the individual is otherwise well enough to participate.

Families should notify AAV of a learner's absence through the school's usual attendance process. AAV does not ordinarily require a medical note for return to school, except when documentation is needed for a medical accommodation or when directed by public health.

Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Learners will have regular opportunities to clean their hands, including on arrival when appropriate, before eating, after using the washroom, after outdoor activities, and after coughing, sneezing, or contact with bodily fluids.
- Soap, paper towels or an air dryer, and other supplies will be kept stocked. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly soiled.
- When appropriate, AAV may provide a Health Canada-authorized alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol, with age-appropriate supervision.
- Everyone is expected to cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow, dispose of tissues promptly, and clean their hands afterward.
- Guides model these practices and offer additional support to younger learners as needed.

Cleaning, shared materials, and bodily fluids

- The premises receive regular general cleaning. Frequently touched surfaces and shared equipment are cleaned and disinfected at least once in each 24-hour period when used, and whenever visibly dirty.

- Cleaning focuses on spaces actually used. Frequently touched surfaces may include doorknobs, light switches, railings, toilet handles, faucets, keyboards, appliances, counters, sports equipment, and other shared items.
- Toys, manipulatives, fabrics, sand, foam, playdough, carpets, and rugs may be used even when they cannot be cleaned frequently. Hand hygiene before and after shared use is emphasized.
- Items that touch the mouth or contact bodily fluids are not shared unless cleaned and disinfected between users. Dishwasher-safe items may be sanitized using an adequately hot sanitize cycle.
- For blood or other bodily fluids, staff use disposable gloves, clean their hands before putting gloves on and after removing them, and follow applicable first-aid and safe-work procedures.
- Cleaning and disinfecting products are stored securely and used according to product labels and safety requirements.

Ventilation and indoor environment

AAV works with the facility operator to ensure mechanical heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems are operated and maintained for ongoing comfort and proper function. Ventilation is considered holistically, including outdoor-air supply, filtration, air exchange, and air distribution. Where compatible with the system and facility, the operator may consider finer filtration such as MERV 13, increased air exchange, and building-control adjustments.

- Windows or doors may be opened when weather and safety permit and doing so will not interfere with the mechanical system.
- Fans and air conditioners should not blow air directly from one person's breathing zone toward another. Horizontal cross-breezes should be avoided.
- Portable HEPA filtration or natural ventilation may be considered for regularly occupied spaces without mechanical ventilation.
- Except when needed during high-heat events, portable air conditioners and fans should not be used in an unventilated room with doors and windows closed.
- If ventilation is temporarily compromised, AAV will consult the facility operator, limit use of the affected space, relocate activities, increase safe natural ventilation, or suspend occupancy as circumstances require. Heat and wildfire-smoke guidance will also be considered.

Masks and personal protective equipment

Unless required by public health or another applicable authority, wearing a mask is a personal choice. AAV will support that choice respectfully. Masks are most effective when they fit, are worn, and are handled correctly and are used with other prevention measures. Required personal protective equipment for first aid, cleaning, toileting, or bodily-fluid exposure remains governed by the applicable safe-work procedure or individual care plan.

Personal space and food safety

- Everyone is encouraged to respect the distance at which another person feels comfortable.
- Routine food-safety practices and diligent hand hygiene apply to meals, snacks, cooking activities, celebrations, and school events.
- Food, drinks, and unwashed utensils or other items that touch the mouth should not be shared.
- Any food service subject to the Food Premises Regulation will meet applicable requirements, including FOODSAFE training, food-safety plans, or permits when required. AAV will consult an Island Health environmental health officer when needed.

6. Illness developing at school

If a learner becomes sick at school and cannot participate fully in regular studio activities:

- a Guide or staff member will move the learner to a comfortable, supervised space away from the main studio activities when practical;
- the learner's parent/guardian or authorized emergency contact will be contacted and asked to pick up the learner as soon as possible;
- the learner will continue to be supervised and supported in an age-appropriate way until pickup;
- hands will be cleaned and any surfaces or materials soiled by bodily fluids will be cleaned and disinfected.

If a Guide, staff member, volunteer, or visitor becomes sick and cannot participate in regular activities, they should leave campus as soon as it is safe to do so. Emergency medical care will be sought when symptoms are severe or urgent.

AAV will clean and disinfect surfaces or equipment that may have contacted the ill person's bodily fluids before others use them. Cleaning the entire room is not routinely required.

7. Returning after illness

An individual may generally return when symptoms have improved and the individual is well enough to participate fully in regular activities. Some illnesses, including gastrointestinal illness caused by norovirus, may require a longer absence. Individuals must follow any disease-specific advice from a health-care provider or public health. Symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed condition, such as seasonal allergies, do not require absence when the person is otherwise well enough to participate. When unsure, families and staff should consult a health-care provider or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.

8. Learners with disabilities diverse abilities or health needs

AAV will use prevention measures that promote inclusion. Guides, staff, and health-service providers working closely with a learner who has medical complexity, immune suppression, a disability or diverse ability, or direct or delegated care needs will follow routine infection-control practices and the learner's individual care plan, where applicable.

- The need for alternative learning arrangements because of severe immune compromise or medical complexity will be considered case by case with the family and medical care provider.
- Personal protective equipment for health services will be determined through the individual care plan, standard risk assessment, and applicable safe-work procedures.
- Studio configurations and activities may be adapted to meet learner needs without imposing unnecessary restrictions on the broader learner community.
- Reasonable accommodations will be considered without stigma or discrimination.

9. Programs activities and off-site learning

- Studio activities, physical activity, music, cooking, and other programs will use prevention practices appropriate to the activity.
- Visitors, volunteers, gatherings, celebrations, and community use may proceed under normal practices while following this plan and any temporary measures in effect.
- Transportation arranged by AAV will follow applicable BCCDC prevention measures and any requirements of the transportation provider.
- For field trips or activities at another workplace or facility, the group follows the more stringent applicable measures of AAV and the destination.
- Emergency and evacuation drills should consider this plan. In an actual emergency, prevention measures may be suspended when necessary for a timely and safe response.

10. Managing communicable disease activity

Most communicable diseases are managed by the individual or family through routine measures. Public health may become directly involved when a reportable disease, such as measles, is identified or when broader community risk warrants additional measures. When AAV has concerns about transmission or needs support, the Head of School will contact Island Health.

- The Medical Health Officer determines whether, when, and how to communicate about increased communicable-disease activity and whether contact notification, exclusion, testing, immunization, masking, enhanced cleaning, or other measures are needed.

- AAV will use caution with notifications beyond those recommended by public health, will protect personal privacy, and will not identify an affected person unless authorized or legally required.
- Temporary measures will be proportionate to the identified risk and will be removed when no longer recommended.

11. School closures

Functional closure

The Head of School may temporarily close the school when staffing or operational capacity is insufficient to provide the required level of instruction, supervision, learner support, first aid, cleaning, or other essential functions. When considering or implementing a functional closure, AAV will notify its Island Health Medical Health Officer and the Ministry of Education and Child Care at erase@gov.bc.ca. Families will be notified as promptly as possible.

Public-health closure

A Medical Health Officer may order a temporary closure or other measures when necessary to prevent or control communicable-disease transmission. AAV will comply with that direction and communicate relevant information to families and staff.

12. Communication records and privacy

- Health notices will be factual, respectful, and based on reliable public-health information.
- Personal health information will be collected, used, stored, and disclosed only as reasonably necessary and in accordance with applicable privacy requirements.
- Families and staff are expected to provide timely, accurate information when public-health follow-up or accommodation is required.
- Questions about this policy should be directed to the Head of School at info@actonacademyvictoria.ca.

13. Review consultation and availability

The Head of School will review this plan at least annually, whenever the provincial guidelines are updated, when temporary additional measures are introduced, or as circumstances require. The review will involve the applicable site or health and safety representatives, Guides and staff, the facility

operator, and other partners as appropriate, with attention to any gaps in implementation. The current plan will be readily available to families, staff, visitors, and workers.

14. References and key contacts

- BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings, September 2023.
- BC Centre for Disease Control and Ministry of Health, Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools.
- WorkSafeBC, Communicable Disease Prevention guidance and A Guide for Employers.
- Island Health Medical Health Officer general inquiries: 1-800-204-6166.
- HealthLink BC: 8-1-1.