

Plan for Staff Return to APSEA Centre September 2020

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Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to provide APSEA staff with infection prevention and control standards and procedures to ensure the health and safety of staff upon their return to the APSEA Centre on South Street in Halifax, NS. Most APSEA staff work at school buildings (or provincial education offices) in the four Atlantic Provinces and they need to follow the respective Plan for that province/location, along with the Plan for APSEA Field-Based Staff Return to Work. As we are planning for alternate service delivery options for short term programs and assessments, students and families will not be coming to the APSEA Centre.

HAND HYGIENE

Hand hygiene (hand cleaning) is the single most important procedure for preventing the spread of healthcare associated infections. Hand hygiene recommendations:

1. Public health recommends using plain soap and water when hands are visibly soiled with food, dirt or bodily fluids.
2. If soap and water are unavailable, then hand sanitizing with an alcohol-based hand rub is recommended. Health Canada recommends using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

All staff are required to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water or alternatively to sanitize their hands if soap and water are not available before entering the workplace, and throughout their shifts.

RESPIRATORY AND HEALTH ETIQUETTE

We must all take the following steps to protect ourselves not only from new and emerging diseases but also from the common cold and the flu:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, and other parts of your face with your hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze either using a tissue or by coughing or sneezing into your elbow or sleeve.
- Discard used tissue in the garbage and wash your hands immediately afterwards in accordance with proper hand hygiene guidelines.
- Avoid close contact with anyone with the following symptoms: cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat, weakness or headache.
- Avoid sharing personal items that come into contact with saliva such as toothbrushes, eating utensils drinks/water bottles and towels.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

To reduce the risk of healthcare associated infections, staff are advised to keep a minimum 2-metre distance between themselves and other staff. Where possible, staff should reduce activities that require close physical proximity or contact with people, such as in-person team meetings. If a team meeting is being conducted, utilize a large enough space to maintain a 2-metre distance between all participants in the meeting. When possible, staff should make use of teleconferencing, email, instant messaging, and cloud-based communication platforms to maintain physical distancing.

If a meeting room is used, cleaning staff will clean it immediately after the meeting has ended. Therefore, there must be a minimum of one hour between the end of one meeting and the beginning of the next meeting.

All staff must wear a face mask while they are in common areas of the APSEA Centre - such as lobbies, lunch rooms, hallways, elevators, etc. Staff do not have to wear a mask while at their own desk or office.

Various signs and markers will be added to offices to help manage traffic flow and to maintain physical distancing. APSEA will be limiting the number of staff simultaneously using meeting rooms, elevators, stairwells, hallways, and common areas to ensure adherence to physical distancing standards.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are barriers used by staff to protect mucous membranes, airways, skin and clothing from exposure to bodily fluids. Using PPE will decrease exposure risk and prevent transmission of infectious agents. All staff are required to wear face masks at the workplace when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

APSEA will provide all APSEA staff with the following PPE.

1. Disposable gloves and masks
2. Reusable clear view masks (to be washed at home by staff)
3. Visors
4. Disinfectant in spray bottles and wipe cloths
5. Hand sanitizer
6. Plexiglass/plastic barriers, where appropriate

Staff can contact their manager/supervisor who will then contact Dave Clarke, Purchasing Clerk, via email for PPE replenishments.

CLEANING AND SANITIZING

Cleaning staff will perform enhanced cleaning of all high traffic and high touch surfaces. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed at various locations including elevators, washrooms and lobbies for general frequent use. Staff will be provided with disinfectant sprays and cloths to clean their own office surfaces such as chairs, desks, tables, laptops, keyboards, and phones before and after use. Staff who have concerns should contact their direct Manager/Supervisor.

USE OF PHOTOCOPIERS (OR OTHER SHARED EQUIPMENT)

After using a photocopier (or other shared equipment) the staff member is to wipe it down with the provided disinfectant spray and disposable cloth.

LUNCHROOM USAGE

Staff wishing to use the lunch room facilities will be required to provide their own utensils, cups, plates, etc. Once finished, they are to clean the area used and remove the utensils, plates, etc., that they have brought. Staff must follow signs to manage traffic flow and to maintain physical distancing.

SELF-DECLARATION BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER WORK

BEFORE – Before leaving home, staff must self-screen for symptoms each day. If a staff member feels unwell, they should notify their manager and refrain from coming to work. If you have any symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 infection, or any other symptoms that concern you, stay home and contact 811. If tested, Public Health will inform the individual when isolation may be lifted.

DURING – If a staff member develops symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 infection, they should immediately wash their hands, report their symptoms to their immediate Supervisor, avoid contact with other staff members and follow the Public Health Guidelines in their respective province.

AFTER – Staff are required to update their manager/supervisor on a daily basis if they are away from work due to illness.

TRAVEL DECLARATION

Staff planning to travel outside of Atlantic Canada for business purposes must seek permission from their manager/supervisor first. If they are travelling outside of Atlantic Canada for personal reasons, we ask that they inform their manager/supervisor and the Coordinator of Human Resources. Public Health guidelines suggest that, upon returning from travel outside of the country, you self-quarantine for 14 days. Upon returning to their province of employment, staff are required to refrain from going into the office for 14 days. Staff should be aware that this may result in an unpaid leave of absence. Non-essential business travel is discouraged.

FLEXIBLE WORKPLACES AND SCHEDULE

APSEA will assess options for flexible workplaces and schedules on a case by case basis. These may be for a temporary period or for a specified longer period.

GUEST SIGN IN AT RECEPTION/SECURITY DESKS

When guests arrive and request entry to either the APSEA Administration or Residence Building using the intercom system, they are to be asked first if they are displaying any symptoms or have been in contact with anyone with symptoms. They are to be denied entry if they answer yes.

If admitted, they are to sign in at the respective reception or security desk. They must leave their full name and phone number should this be required for contact tracing.

All guests are to be met at the reception or security area by an APSEA employee and accompanied by that employee who shall ensure they follow appropriate procedures.

ROOM RENTALS

Individuals renting meeting space at the APSEA Centre will be provided with a copy of APSEA's Return to School/Work Plan in advance of their booking to familiarize themselves with APSEA's protocols. An APSEA staff person will meet the primary contact person upon arrival for the scheduled booking.

DAILY STAFF LOG

An electronic log will be created and all staff working at the APSEA buildings will be required to enter data each day indicating what areas of each building they were in. This will assist in contact tracing should it be required.

TENANTS

Tenants in the APSEA buildings will be informed of this Plan and will be required to follow it. As well, consultations with each tenant will take place to address any specific concerns or requirements. PPE supplies will be discussed and arrangements made as needed.

SHORT TERM PROGRAMS AND ASSESSMENT

Short Term Programs and Assessment staff will follow the applicable sections of the Field-Based Staff Return to Work document while planning for delivery of services.

HOW TO REPORT COVID-19 ISSUES

If at any point in time you wish to share your concerns about staff adherence to this Plan we encourage you to report/discuss your concerns with your manager/supervisor or the Coordinator of Human Resources.

Should a case of COVID 19 arise, APSEA will follow the Public Health protocols and procedures, including communications to staff and the public, and possible shut down of the buildings.

WORK REFUSALS

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act staff have the right to refuse to perform work if they hold a bona fide belief a “physical condition” in the workplace constitutes a risk to their health or safety. Please discuss your concerns with your manager/supervisor or the Coordinator of Human Resources.

APSEA would like to acknowledge CNIB for sharing their COVID-19 planning document.