

VGC COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN FOR SAFE ON-CAMPUS OPERATIONS

VGC's safety plan has been made in conjunction with WorkSafe BC's policies and procedures and is informed by the Go-Forward Guidelines for post-secondary institutions. VGC strives to provide a safe workplace and learning environment for its students and staff, and this plan is designed to support a safe return to campus. This is not a replacement of our current, standard health and safety policy (which can be found at vgc.ca/policies/), but rather is designed to work alongside these policies and add protocols that look specifically at safety with regards to teaching, learning, administration and student support within VGC with respect to the current COVID-19 health threat.

This plan will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary in response to the changing situation and any new guidelines and recommendations from WorkSafe BC, The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training and the Provincial Health Officer. Any comments or suggestions can be sent to academicadmin@vgc.ca

VGC International College's Commitment to a Safe Learning and Working Environment

As an institution VGC is committed to providing a safe, comfortable and responsible learning and working environment for everyone involved and offering support to students and staff in line with its core values.

We believe in:

- Making the safety of our students and staff our highest priority
- Following the guidelines laid out by the BC Government for our in-person classes
- Providing the highest quality online and face-to-face classes
- Recognizing the importance of face-to-face learning and offering in-person classes to our students as safety guidelines and the situation permits
- Providing a safe environment for all staff and students
- Updating our policies and procedures as the situation necessitates

Reducing the Risk of Person-to-Person Transmission in the Workplace

When looking at the protocols for ensuring a safe return and on-campus experience for everyone, VGC is employing a 4 stage model that has 4 distinct levels of protection.

Level 1 – Elimination

This involves promoting strategies such as physical distancing, directional travel within the campus and reduction of close contact through arrangement of rooms and furniture.

Level 2 – Engineering Controls

This includes installing physical barriers such as plexi-glass screens in high traffic areas (such as reception or front desk) or areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Level 3 – Administrative Controls

Instituting policies and guidelines at an administrative level including best practice and safety rules for staff, enhanced cleaning protocols, increased hygiene facilities etc.

Level 4 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Considering the appropriate and necessary use of masks in high traffic areas or where a 2m/6ft distance may not be kept.

Roles and Responsibilities

The safety of VGC's staff and students is a responsibility shared by everyone. To minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19, everyone in the VGC family has specific roles and responsibilities.

As an institution, VGC commits to:

- Ensuring we are in compliance with all federal and provincial health and safety regulations
- Ensuring all areas of our campuses have been assessed for safe occupancy limits and having maximum capacities clearly displayed
- Keeping the safety plan that covers every department up to date and making sure it is accessible to all appropriate parties
- Posting appropriate signage in all areas of the school regarding our safety protocols
- Making sure physical barriers (e.g. plexiglass screens) are installed where appropriate
- Providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizing supplies across campus
- Promoting physical distancing and safe conduct with signage and training
- Establishing enhanced cleaning protocols and ensuring these are followed
- Clearly communicating relevant policies and protocols with both the staff and the student body
- Ensuring everyone within VGC adheres to the college policies regarding COVID-19

Directors and managers are responsible for:

- Contributing to VGC's COVID-19 safety plan and protocols
- Reading, understanding and following VGC's COVID-19 safety plan and protocols
- Communicating this safety plan to their respective departments/teams
- Ensuring any relevant training is done within their department/team
- Clearly communicating any updates to VGC's COVID-19 safety plan to their respective departments/teams
- Understanding how to report potential exposure or other COVID-19 related health and safety concerns and the associated procedures that follow this

All staff are responsible for:

- Reading, understanding and following VGC's COVID-19 safety protocols
- Attending any health and safety meetings as required
- Ensuring students are following safety protocols, including physical distancing and mask wearing, both in and out of the classroom
- Bringing any concerns and/or suggestions to the attention of management

All staff, students and campus visitors agree to:

- Self-monitor their health and stay home if they present any symptoms related to COVID-19 as posted at the entrance to both campuses.
- Sanitize their hands and have their temperature checked before entering the building
- Follow all safety protocols and posted signage regarding such things as: physical distancing, mask wearing, direction of travel, hand washing and maximum occupancy etc.
- Wear a mask in all common areas at all times and in classrooms as requested by staff members or other students
- Report potential exposure or other COVID-19 related health and safety concerns
- Read and agree to our COVID-19 safety measures as posted on campus and emailed to staff and students
- Anyone who does not abide by these rules and procedures as they pertain to COVID-19 will be removed from the VGC campuses

We also acknowledge that each individual should be observing certain fundamental personal protective policies both in and out of the school including but not limited to:

- Staying informed, being prepared and following public health advice
- Practicing good hygiene
- Staying at home or in a designated space and away from others if symptomatic or feeling ill
- Maintaining physical distancing
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces or objects as necessary
- Wearing non-medical masks where mandated (for example on public transit or in certain stores) as well as in all situations where physical distancing of 2m/6ft is not possible
- Wearing a mask if experiencing symptoms and in close contact with others (for example when seeking medical advice)
- Reducing personal non-essential travel

Protocols for Safe Campus Access

Pre-arrival

Any students coming into the country from abroad are required to do 14 days self-quarantine and complete a [self isolation plan](#). Depending on availability, this may be in homestay, VGC's student residence, or a hotel.

Once VGC has been informed of the arrival dates, we will confirm if there is space in homestay or residence for the isolation period. If not, VGC will assist in finding a hotel which will accommodate the self isolation.

All students are sent a pre-arrival package before the start their studies, which includes COVID-19 information and protocols and also includes a list of options for groceries, healthcare services and mental healthcare services.

14 Day Quarantine on arrival: Homestay and VGC Residence

Please note - students who are not staying in VGC homestay or residence will be required to provide VGC with a detailed self-isolation plan including where they are staying, what measures they are taking and how they are getting there. VGC will help these students organize a suitable place for self-isolation if necessary.

Transport from the airport:

Students must not use public transportation to their place of isolation. VGC encourages all students arriving in Canada to organize their airport pick-up using VGC's transfer service for their own and others' safety. If pick up is not organized with VGC, students will be asked to provide a detailed explanation of how they intend to get from the airport to their place of isolation.

House/Residence Self-Isolation Rules:

- Students must stay in their room for the first two weeks, only leaving the place of residence for medically necessary appointments
- Contact must be avoided with any other people living in the place of residence. If contact cannot be avoided, a mask must be worn and a distance of 2 meters must be kept. Interactions must be brief
- If in homestay, each homestay family will also have their own specific rules for students during isolation. Students must keep in touch with their host family via text/whatsapp or, where necessary, talk to them in common areas of the house with a 2m/6ft distance between parties
- If in the VGC residence, all orientation materials will be sent prior to arrival
- Students in homestay will have meals provided by their homestay family. Meals may be brought to their room, or they may be asked to eat separately from the family. Snacks/extra items are the student's responsibility. The host family can be asked for help with this if necessary
- Students in VGC's residence must not leave the residence to go food shopping and must get food and groceries delivered directly from sources such as
 - Insta Cart: <https://www.instacart.ca/>
 - Fresh Street Market: <https://www.freshstmarket.com/>
 - Spud.ca: <https://www.spud.ca/>
 - Skip the Dishes: <https://www.skipthedishes.com/>
 - Door Dash: <https://www.doordash.com/>
- Please note, the same rules apply for any student who is self-isolating in any other form of accommodation, for example, a hotel

Post-Isolation:

Even after the self-isolation period is over, students must observe certain rules:

VGC Residence:

- Bedroom and bathroom must be kept clean and high contact surfaces such as door handles, taps, kitchen appliances etc. must be disinfected. Current BC law means residence staff cannot enter the residence suites to clean
- Residence staff will provide necessary cleaning products such as mops, disinfectant wipes and cleaning chemicals
- Weekly check-ups will be made to ensure the condition of the residence suites is acceptable
- Residence staff will continue providing a weekly cleaning of the hallways and elevators
- All kitchen items (cups, cutlery etc.) must be washed thoroughly with soap after use
- Personal hygiene such as regular hand washing, covering the mouth when coughing/sneezing etc. must be carried out
- Other students/guests must not be invited to the VGC residence. Guests are currently prohibited in order to ensure the safety of all residents
- Physical distancing of 2m/6ft must be maintained in all common areas

VGC Homestay:

Please note, in addition to the following rules, each homestay family will have their own rules. It is the student's responsibility to ask about and follow these. If the student is unclear about any of these rules at any time, they can contact vgchomestay@vgc.ca

- Bedroom must be kept clean and high contact surfaces such as door handles, taps, kitchen appliances etc. must be disinfected.
- The host family will provide necessary cleaning products such as disinfectant wipes and cleaning chemicals
- All kitchen items (cups, cutlery etc.) must be washed thoroughly with soap after use
- Personal hygiene such as regular hand washing, covering the mouth when coughing/sneezing etc, must be carried out
- After the 2 week isolate period, students are allowed to attend school but must ask the host family's permission regarding other activities
- Guests must not be invited to the homestay without the host family's prior permission

Students in either homestay or residence who show any symptoms must follow the procedure outlined later in this document regarding COVID-19 symptoms. Neither VGC or the host family will be held responsible if a student contracts the virus whilst in homestay or the VGC residence.

Any student who develops possible COVID-19 symptoms during their 14 day quarantine will be directed to the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool <https://bc.thrive.health/> for more information on symptoms and 8-1-1 to speak to a professional and be requested to take a COVID-19 test. If the test comes back negative, they will continue their 14 day quarantine as arranged. If the test results are positive, the student will be asked to complete a further 14 days in quarantine from the date of the test.

Student services and the marketing department is in regular contact with all students regarding their plans for coming into campus

Every student is sent VGC's on-campus safety rules when they are scheduled to come into campus for face to face classes. Attendance in class is taken as agreement to this document.

Daily Covid-19 Self-Assessment

All staff, students and visitors must assess themselves for any COVID-19 related symptoms daily before entering the campus. These are posted on signs at the entrance to both VGC campuses and include, but are not limited to:

- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- New muscle aches
- Cough
- Sneezing
- Congested/runny nose
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Loss of sense of smell
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite

The BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool can be found at <https://bc.thrive.health/>

Anyone found to be presenting any of these symptoms will not be allowed entrance to the campus and may be asked to go home and self isolate for either 14 days in accordance with the BC Centre for Disease Control, or until a negative test result has been verified.

Students, staff members and visitors who have presented symptoms or are concerned about their health/situation are also encouraged to call 8-1-1 to speak to a health professional and follow the guidelines/advice given.

Temperature checks and on-campus attendance recording

Each person entering any of VGC's campuses will have their temperature checked at the door. They will also be required to sanitize their hands.

Each person entering the campus will also be signed in by a member of staff and a permanent record of this kept for the purposes of contact tracing if necessary.

Campus Wide Safety Measures

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface and then touching the face. In order to stop the transmission of the virus, VGC has enhanced and rigorous campus wide safety measures.

All staff, students and visitors are required to adhere to the following protocols and procedures at all times. Anyone not following these procedures may be asked to leave the campus.

Reduced Campus Capacity and Occupancy Limits

Occupancy in each VGC Campus is limited to 50 people. This may change in accordance with government guidelines and recommendations. No more than 6 - 8 students are allowed in each classroom, depending on classroom size, and all individuals must remain 2 meters apart at all times throughout the school as directed by the Provincial Health Officer. Classroom capacity signage is clearly displayed on the door to each classroom in use.

Bathrooms also have clearly signed, reduced capacity.

Common areas are clearly signed with the maximum occupancy and off-limits areas are also clearly marked.

Orientation and graduation will continue to be done online to avoid the necessity of large groups.

Limiting/Regulating On-Campus Visitors and Student Interaction

While the college is open to employees and students, all non-necessary visits are limited and face-to-face consultations with student services/academics/marketing/pathways are by appointment only.

Other visits are limited to essential maintenance as authorized by senior management.

Once students have arrived in the school they are requested to not leave the building until the lunchbreak, at which time they may choose to leave the school but will not be able to re-enter until 10 minutes before the end of the break. This allows for a one-way system to be in place entering and exiting the building and minimizes traffic in these areas. For breaks and lunchtime, students are asked to stay in their own classrooms and not use the common areas.

Students are not permitted to move between campuses.

Any extra-curricular activities are conducted off campus in a socially-distanced and responsible manner.

Physical Distancing

Students and staff must maintain 2m/6ft from each other. Students and staff must refrain from close greetings including but not limited to: hugs, kisses on the cheek and handshakes.

We request that all students and staff follow the same processes inside and outside the school. VGC will not allow people to group together outside of the front doors. Smokers must maintain 2 meters from others and 6 meters from the doorway.

Various measures have been taken to promote physical distancing including:

- Changing classroom set-up to promote space
- Signage promoting 6ft/2m distancing in corridors, lobbies and stairwells
- Institution of one-way systems/directional travel, reinforced with signage and arrows
- Plexi-glass screens at the front desks in both campuses

Face masks

VGC requires everyone entering its buildings to wear a face covering at all times in common areas. These include the lobbies, corridors, stairwells and bathrooms.

Facemasks may be requested at times in other areas such as classrooms. If someone is requested to wear a facemask, VGC asks that they follow this request.

Hand cleaning/sanitization

VGC has provided various hand sanitizing stations around the campuses, especially in high traffic areas, for example at the entrances, by the bathrooms and by the watercoolers amongst others. Hand sanitizer is also available in all classrooms and offices.

Adequate hygiene facilities and supplies are also maintained in all washrooms.

Signage is posted throughout the school to encourage increased hand hygiene.

Signage

Extensive signage has been implemented at both VGC campuses. All VGC staff, students and visitors are expected to adhere to this signage at all times.

Some examples of this signage are:



Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitizing Protocols

VGC has initiated enhanced cleaning procedures in accordance with the guidelines from WorkSafe BC and the Provincial Health Officer. The college has a cleaner on staff who will be ensuring that all surfaces are being cleaned throughout the day and in the evenings after school is finished with a particular emphasis on high-contact areas including but not limited to: washrooms, printers, shared tables and chairs, door handles and railings.

All classrooms and offices/front desks will have disinfectant and paper towels so that students and staff can clean their areas throughout the day as well.

To minimize the number of surfaces that people touch, VGC has removed tables and chairs that will not be used, as well as microwaves.

Cleaning Schedule:

The cleaner on staff is responsible for the following cleaning schedule:

Daily/Nightly

- Tabletops/desks in classrooms wiped down
- Light switches wiped down
- All trash and recycling bins emptied school wide
- Chairs in classrooms wiped down
- Floors cleaned
- Entrance cleaned in both campuses (floors and surfaces)
- Bathroom mirrors cleaned
- Bathroom doors and partitions cleaned

After each break

- All high contact areas including: door handles, sanitizer stations, stair handrails

Multiple times daily

- Washrooms cleaned including wiping down toilets, urinals, floors, door handles/partitions, sinks, dispensers
- Vending machines and water dispensers wiped down
- Photocopiers/printers

All staff are responsible for:

- Wiping down their work area at the end of each work day if this area is shared with another person
- Wiping down their phones/keyboard & mouse/desktop weekly if in a private office

Delivery of Classes

In order to best accommodate the needs of our diverse student body and our teaching and administrative staff, VGC is employing a blended learning model which allows for both remote, online learning and face-to-face classes on campus.

For those students who are unable to take in-person classes, or who are uncomfortable doing so in the current situation, they are able to take their classes online from home. However, we recognize the importance of being able to offer in-person classes for a number of reasons including:

- Language education is experiential and in-person participation allows for a level of interaction and immersion not offered by online learning which both enhances and speeds up the learning process

- International students away from friends and family who are learning solely online experience increased feelings of isolation, loneliness and homesickness. The opportunity to interact face-to-face with others on campus is an important component of mental health

Students wishing to attend in-person classes are required to let the school know. They will be scheduled to come into campus on set days and entry times will be staggered. Students who arrive at school outside their allotted days may be asked to return to their residence.

Students attending face-to face classes, will, where possible, be kept in the same groups or 'cohorts' to ensure that the interaction between different groups is limited. They will not be permitted to move between campuses.

While all students who wish to attend face to face classes will be given the opportunity to do this, initial priority will be given to those with accessibility issues (for example poor internet connection) or those who have concerns about their mental health.

All classrooms have reduced capacity to ensure a safe environment.

Off-Campus Activities

All VGC activities will be conducted off-campus and will be in compliance with the safety guidelines set out by the Provincial Health Officer as well as complying with current off-campus activity protocols. VGC is still committed to providing activities wherever possible to ensure that VGC students are able to socialize with each other, create social bonds and enjoy an enhanced sense of wellness through meaningful interaction with others.

Meeting places will all be at the activity in question, not on the school campus and VGC will not be responsible for organizing transport to or from any activity.

All activities will be limited in number and students must sign up at least 24 hours in advance.

All participants in activities will be expected to remain 6ft/2m apart at all times, or, where this is not possible, wear a mask.

Procedure for COVID-19 Symptoms

It is important that all staff and students take seriously their responsibility for staying home or going home if they have any symptoms. Anyone who has reported symptoms/tested positive for COVID-19 and is completing a 14 day quarantine period, will not be permitted back on campus until the PHA has approved their return.

Symptoms Developed Off-Campus:

If a student or staff member reports to the school that they have developed symptoms, the following protocol will be followed:

- They will be directed to the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool <https://bc.thrive.health/> for more information on symptoms and 8-1-1 to speak to a professional and be required to take a COVID-19 test (The test will be mandatory for staff wanting to do a 14 day quarantine)
- They will not be allowed back on campus until a 14 day quarantine has been conducted or a negative test result has been given. Proof of this test will be required by the school
- If a positive test result is given, the school will close for 3 days for a deep clean
- Students and staff who were in contact with the person in question will be notified and also requested to take a test/quarantine
- If the student is in a VGC homestay or residence, these will also be notified
- Any staff who are aware of a situation involving a symptomatic student are responsible for reporting this to management

Symptoms Developed On-Campus:

If a student or staff member presents COVID-19 like symptoms whilst on campus, the following protocol will be followed:

- They will immediately be asked to put on a mask and sanitize their hands
- Unless immediate care is required, they will also be asked to leave the campus and return to their place of residence via taxi or private vehicle, avoiding all public transport
- All areas used by the individual in question will be disinfected and cleaned immediately and, if necessary, relocated elsewhere to allow this to happen
- They will be directed to the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool <https://bc.thrive.health/> for more information on symptoms and 8-1-1 to speak to a professional and be required to take a COVID-19 test (The test will be mandatory for staff wanting to do a 14 day quarantine)
- They will not be allowed back on campus until a 14 day quarantine has been conducted or a negative test result has been given. Proof of this test will be required by the school
- If a positive test result is given, the school will close for 3 days for a deep clean
- Students and staff who were in contact with the person in question will be notified and also requested to take a test/quarantine
- If the student is in a VGC homestay or residence, these will also be notified
- Any staff who are aware of a situation involving a symptomatic student are responsible for reporting this to management

In the case of an outbreak

In addition to VGC's Procedure for COVID-19 Symptoms developed off and on campus, if COVID-19 transmission is identified among students or staff that have entered the VGC campus, VGC will contact the local PHA to see if VGC meets the threshold of an "outbreak" at the institution. VGC will also follow all advice provided regarding the necessary next steps.

Everyone who enters each campus each day (staff, students and, if applicable, visitors) is recorded and a list of names and emails is kept. In the case of an outbreak, VGC will contact the necessary people immediately.

If any of these students are in VGC Homestay or Residence. The homestay family will be notified, as well as the residence flat mates.

VGC's "outbreak response team" includes The Director of Studies, the Director of Student Services/Registrar and the Student services Department. The Director of Studies (DOS) (or in the absence of the DOS, the Director of Student Services / Registrar) will contact the local health authority immediately to explain the situation as well as contacting all staff affected. The student services team will be responsible for contacting all students and homestay families.

Once these initial steps have been taken, VGC will assess how the outbreak, or case(s) came about. We will look at if this is something that VGC can change in terms of risk management, additional screening and mitigation techniques. VGC will speak with it's Safety Committee and talk to staff and students for any additional feedback or concerns.

For those students or staff who have to quarantine, their manager, or department responsible for them will check in regularly throughout their quarantine. Mental health resources will be made available to all those quarantine in case they need support throughout their quarantine.

Mental Health

VGC is aware of the many mental health challenges presented by the current situation with COVID-19 and is committed to offering support with these challenges.

Students or staff experiencing anxiety, depression or other mental health challenges brought about or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic will be offered the following resources:

- Here2Talk which offers confidential mental health counselling 24/7 <https://here2talk.ca/>
- 'BounceBack' which provides free online, video and phone based coaching for non-crisis situations <https://bouncebackbc.ca/>
- Canadian Mental Health Association Self Check-In which will direct individuals to the most appropriate resources <https://cmhabc.force.com/MentalHealthCheckIn/s/>

Staff members who are concerned about an individual's mental health are encouraged to report their concerns to a supervisor.

Monitoring and Updating of the Safety Plan

This safety plan is based on the current guidelines and recommendations from WorkSafe BC, The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training, the Provincial Health Officer and the BC CDC. Changes will be made as necessary in response to updated information and recommendations from these sources to ensure VGC is a safe environment for everyone on campus.

This safety plan is posted on VGC's Website and will be given to all staff members and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Any questions or concerns can be directed to academicadmin@vgc.ca