

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 Return to Campus 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 safe on campus operations. 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 as the situation permits
- Providing a safe environment for all staff and students
- Updating our policies and procedures as the situation necessitates

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

When looking at the protocols for ensuring a safe on-campus experience for everyone, VGC is employing a model with 3 levels of protection.

Level 1 – Elimination

This involves encouraging strategies such as directional travel within the campus and reduction of close contact through arrangement of rooms.

Level 2 – Engineering Controls

This includes installing physical barriers such as plexi-glass screens in high traffic areas such as reception or front desk.

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.

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
- Having a safety plan that covers every department, keeping this 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
- Encouraging physical distancing and safe conduct
- 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
- 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
- Follow all safety protocols and posted signage regarding such things as hand washing etc.
- Report 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
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces or objects as necessary
- Wearing a mask if experiencing symptoms and in close contact with others (for example when seeking medical advice)

Protocols for Safe Campus Access

Pre-arrival

Any students coming into the country from abroad are required to follow the most up to date travel guidelines and regulations as well as any possible isolation regulations.

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 healthcare services and mental healthcare services.

Arrival:

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VGC expects all students to follow the most up to date regulations for entering into the country. If a student is asked to isolate, or take a test, VGC will not allow the student onto campus until the student has fulfilled the requirements.

If a student is required to isolate due to a positive COVID-19 test result:

- They must stay in their room, only leaving for medically necessary appointments.
- Contact with any other people living in the place of residence must be avoided. 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.
- 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.
- Please note, the same rules apply for any student who is self-isolating in any other form of accommodation, for example, a hotel or shared living.

Post-Isolation:

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

- Following the most recent public health COVID-19 updates made by the BC and Federal health authorities
- Following specific VGC rules and requirements as provided to them
- Continuing to practice proper hygiene by washing hands and using hand sanitizer
- Using proper coughing and sneezing etiquette
- Continuing to self-assess and if any symptoms are present, follow the steps stated later in this package.
- If in homestay, respecting the family's house rules if they have anything in addition to this

Studying on Campus:

Daily Covid-19 Self-Assessment

All staff, students and visitors have personal responsibility for assessing themselves for any COVID-19 related symptoms daily before entering the campus. These symptoms 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/>

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 encourages 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.

While on Campus:

VGC will adapt its on campus policies in accordance with current provincial and federal COVID-19 guidelines, to ensure continued safety for its students and staff. These policies cover:

- **Classrooms:** There are no limits on the number of participants for in-class educational activities and no physical distancing requirements. While masks are not mandatory on VGC’s campuses, a student’s choice to wear a mask is encouraged and respected. VGC will however place heavy emphasis on proper hand washing and sanitization etiquette.
- **Orientation and Graduation:** This will run in accordance with current provincial and federal guidelines regarding group gatherings.
- **Social Distancing:** Students and staff should refrain from close greetings including but not limited to: hugs, kisses on the cheek and handshakes.
- **Sanitization:** VGC has various hand sanitizing stations around the campuses, especially in high traffic areas. Signage around the campus promotes proper sanitization.
- **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.
- **Vaccination:** All VGC staff and students who are on campus are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Any student who is not fully vaccinated may take classes online until such time as their vaccination is complete.

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 cleaners 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.

Cleaning Schedule:

The cleaners on staff are responsible for the following cleaning schedule:

<p>Daily/Nightly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>After each break</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All high contact areas including: door handles, sanitizer stations, stair handrails
<p>Multiple times daily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washrooms cleaned including wiping down toilets, urinals, floors, door handles/partitions, sinks, dispensers • Vending machines, microwaves and water dispensers wiped down • Photocopiers/printers 	<p>All staff are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Off-Campus Activities

VGC activities will be conducted on and 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 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.

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 with any COVID-19 symptoms is asked to NOT come onto campus. We ask that students take their classes from home. If they are able to get a COVID-19 test and results are negative, they can come back onto campus.

If a student is unable to get a COVID-19 Test or the test comes back positive, the student must isolate at home for a minimum of 5 days. If the student has no more symptoms after 5 days, they can return to campus. If the student is still feeling unwell after 5 days, they must continue to isolate at home until they no longer have symptoms. This also applies to VGC staff.

If a student begins feeling symptoms, they must inform VGC at academicadmin@vgc.ca. Any student who develops symptoms whilst on campus will be asked to go home.

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VGC asks that no students come into school if they are showing any symptoms at any time. Any staff member who is aware of a situation involving a symptomatic student is responsible for reporting this to management.

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://cmhbc.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