

Earl Marriott Secondary School Exposure Incident Summary

Background

Earl Marriott Secondary School (EMS) in School District 36 Surrey is the fourth largest secondary school in BC. EMS teaches grades 8-12 in English and French Immersion, with each grade level having about 300-400 students. The school is designed to accommodate 1,500 students; however, the total enrollment is currently 1,859 students. There are 11 portables onsite.

In mid-December 2020, a number of exposures occurred at EMS linked to four Physical Education/Active Living classes. There is no confirmed transmission to other classes or cohorts. In total there were 47 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Timeline of Events

December 10-16: Exposures occur in four PE/Active Living classes.

December 14-28: Fraser Health Authority (FHA) issues COVID-19 notifications for EMS.

- s.13
-
-

December 23 & January 3: Surrey School District issues two additional letters in response to parent and community questions about the number of exposures. Letters written in collaboration with FHA.

All exposure dates were reported to the Ministry through the established reporting process.

Contributing Factors

A review by the Surrey School District and public health determined the following activities may have contributed to the exposures at EMS:

Guidelines for Delivering PE Safely	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• s.13 too many gym classes were housed in one space. On some days, all four classes were taking place at the same time and sharing a common gym space. s.13• s.13 Some PE activities promoted close physical contact or intense cardio with no ability for physical distancing (e.g. piggy-back races, using stationary bikes).
Daily Health Check Compliance / Individuals Sick at School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students/staff attending school while showing mild symptoms and positive.
Compliance with Physical Distancing and Mask Protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some students not physical distancing or not wearing masks during breaks and when transitioning between classes, s.13• Staff members sharing a small office and not taking adequate precautions.

Earl Marriott Secondary School Exposure Incident Summary

Key Learnings

- The situation at EMS appears to be the result of the provincial health and safety guidelines for physical and health education either not being followed or being misinterpreted. There is no indication that the guidelines were inadequate in this situation.
- COVID-19 cases related to the EMS exposures were contained to the four PE/Active Living classes and did not spread throughout the school thanks to other health and safety measures in place.
- PE activities that include close physical contact or high-intensity stationary indoor workouts should be avoided in favour of outdoor activities or activities where 2m physical distancing can be maintained.
- Sharing ideas between PE teachers across the district has proved helpful in identifying innovative ways to run PE classes.
- Space was a contributing factor in this situation. EMS is currently at excess capacity and all indoor PE spaces are in use. The new Grandview Heights Secondary, which is scheduled to open in September 2021, will address the overcrowding at EMS.

Actions Taken and Next Steps

Surrey School District has a process in place to perform environmental assessment reviews in any school with an exposure incident or large number of cases. This process was initiated immediately after the self-isolation letters were sent in December. The school district has reviewed and updated their school and staff health and safety plans and the district physical and health education guidelines.

Based on the presentation to the Health and Safety Working Group and the information in this report, the following recommendations are made to the K-12 Education Steering Committee to refer to the Ministry of Education and/or BCCDC for consideration:

1. Issue direction to sector regarding daily health check, physical distancing and mask protocols
 - a. Will be covered as a part of school checklists and updated Health & Safety Plans due to Ministry by February 26th
2. Develop best practices for K-12 physical and health education
 - a. Incorporated in the updates to K-12 guidance released February 4th, 2021
3. Establish provincial K-12 reporting protocol in event of a cluster or outbreak
 - a. Will be established as a part of the rapid response teams announced February 4th, 2021

Page 3 of 6 to/à Page 4 of 6

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Earl Marriott Secondary School Exposure Incident Summary

Background

Earl Marriott Secondary School (EMS) in School District 36 Surrey is the fourth largest secondary school in BC. EMS teaches grades 8-12 in English and French Immersion, with each grade level having about 300-400 students. The school is designed to accommodate 1,500 students; however, the total enrollment is currently 1,859 students. There are 11 portables onsite.

In mid-December 2020, a number of exposures occurred at EMS linked to four Physical Education/Active Living classes. There is no confirmed transmission to other classes or cohorts. In total there were 47 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Timeline of Events

December 10-16: Exposures occur in four PE/Active Living classes.

December 14-28: Fraser Health Authority (FHA) issues COVID-19 notifications for EMS.

- 7 early notification letters to entire school
- 4 self-isolation letters to students and staff in the four PE/Active Living classes
- 16 self-monitoring letters to students and staff in other classes

December 23 & January 3: Surrey School District issues two additional letters in response to parent and community questions about the number of exposures. Letters written in collaboration with FHA.

All exposure dates were reported to the Ministry through the [established reporting process](#).

Contributing Factors

A review by the Surrey School District and public health determined the following activities may have contributed to the exposures at EMS:

Misinterpretation of Guidelines for Delivering PE Safely	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too many gym classes in one space. On some days, all four classes were taking place at the same time and sharing a common gym space.• PE activities that promoted close physical contact or intense cardio with no ability for physical distancing (e.g. piggy-back races, using stationary bikes)
Daily Health Check Compliance / Individuals Sick at School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students/staff attending school while showing mild symptoms and positive.
Lack of Compliance with Physical Distancing and Mask Protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some students not physical distancing or wearing masks during breaks and when transitioning between classes.• Staff members sharing a small office and not taking adequate precautions.

Key Learnings

- The situation at EMS appears to be the result of the [provincial health and safety guidelines](#) for physical and health education either not being followed or being misinterpreted. There is no indication that the guidelines were inadequate in this situation.
- COVID-19 cases related to the EMS exposures were contained to the four PE/Active Living classes and did not spread throughout the school thanks to other health and safety measures in place.

Earl Marriott Secondary School Exposure Incident Summary

- PE activities that include close physical contact or high-intensity stationary indoor workouts should be avoided in favour of outdoor activities or activities where 2m physical distancing can be maintained.
- Sharing ideas between PE teachers across the district has proved helpful in identifying innovative ways to run PE classes.
- Space was a contributing factor in this situation. EMS is currently at excess capacity and all indoor PE spaces are in use. The new Grandview Heights Secondary, which is scheduled to open in September 2021, will address the overcrowding at EMS.

Actions Taken and Next Steps

Surrey School District has a process in place to perform environmental assessment reviews in any school with an exposure incident or large number of cases. This process was initiated immediately after the self-isolation letters were sent in December. The school district has reviewed and updated their school and staff health and safety plans and the district physical and health education guidelines.

Based on the presentation to the Health and Safety Working Group and the information in this report, the following recommendations are made to the K-12 Education Steering Committee to refer to the Ministry of Education and/or BCCDC for consideration:

1. Issue direction to sector regarding daily health check, physical distancing and mask protocols
 - a. Will be covered as a part of school checklists and updated Health & Safety Plans due to Ministry by February 26th
2. Develop best practices for K-12 physical and health education
 - a. Incorporated in the updates to K-12 guidance released February 4th, 2021
3. Establish provincial K-12 reporting protocol in event of a cluster or outbreak
 - a. Will be established as a part of the rapid response teams announced February 4th, 2021