Corona Virus Information for the Classroom

Here we are... A new term but no new certainty. Some of us are teaching online only, some are meeting half the class in the morning and the other half in the afternoon, and some of us are going back to teach as normal. One thing we all have in common is that teaching during CoVid 19 is anything but normal. Many of us heading back into classrooms are stressed about what that could mean and what the possible best practices could be.

We know you don't have time to research how to keep yourselves and your students safe while also preparing to teach in a whole new way, so we have done the research for you. Please remember, we are ESL teachers, not immunologists. Each source of information is provided and we encourage you to check it out for yourselves as well. We have taken some of the top questions in teachers' minds and tried to answer them here.

Preparing for instruction*

I will be wearing a mask, is there other PPE I should consider?

- If you are teaching pronunciation or are working with deaf learners, you may want to consider the transparent face masks that many companies are selling or make your own. (Instructions for making your own mask can be found here Hearing, Speech and Deaf Centre (2020). How to make an accessible mask. Retrieved from https://www.hsdc.org/accessible-deaf-friendly-face-mask/

- Face shields do not sufficiently replace masks, Alberta health has told public school teachers to wear face masks when wearing face shields.

How can I adapt my teaching to help reduce the spread?

- Create a way to communicate with all of your learners quickly to give up-dates and assignments (groups texts? website updates?) and train your learners to check it regularly.

- Remind students of what they need to do before attending school. One teacher recommended sending messages to students on WhatsApp to remind them to bring their masks and to call 811 (instead of coming to school) if they or family members have any cold symptoms.

- Create consistent cohorts of students in class. If trying socially distanced group work, always have learners work with the same few people.
- Avoid activities involving singing, shouting or speaking loudly indoors (practicing plosives may be off the table right now).

- Train each cohort on how to share assignments and instructional content electronically so that when students have to self isolate their peers will help them keep in touch.

- Using personal electronic devices to view handouts is preferable to paper copies being handed back.

What is the best way to set up my classroom?

Example of suitable training room arrangement
(Example shows 8 participants plus instructor)
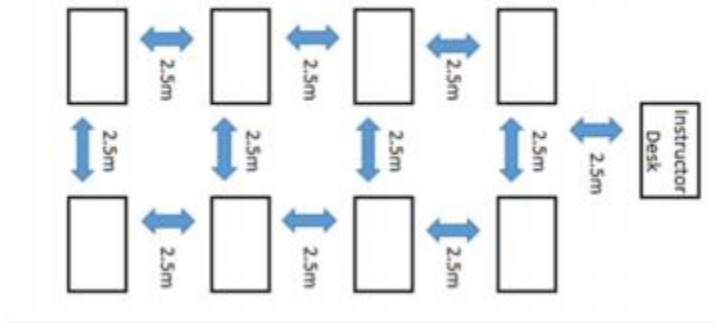
- Have all desks face forward if possible.
- As much as you can, keep doors and windows open to increase air circulation.
- Consider restricting access to areas that the students don't use regularly
- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear.
- Arrange seating away from areas with high airflow (i.e. not in front of air vents).

- Clean equipment between uses if students or staff share anything. One teacher who is in a face to face context just carries a container of Lysol wipes with him everywhere- He finds it handy to sanitize as he goes.

- Consider installing cues such as stickers or signs at frequently touched surfaces (e.g. water fountains, doors) to encourage people to avoid directly touching with their hands.

- Create a "no sharing policy" - all students should have their own supplies.

People say surfaces need to be sanitized. Does the virus just die after a period of time? Do I need to sanitize on Friday afternoons or will everything die in that time?

Length of time the corona virus can live on different surfaces
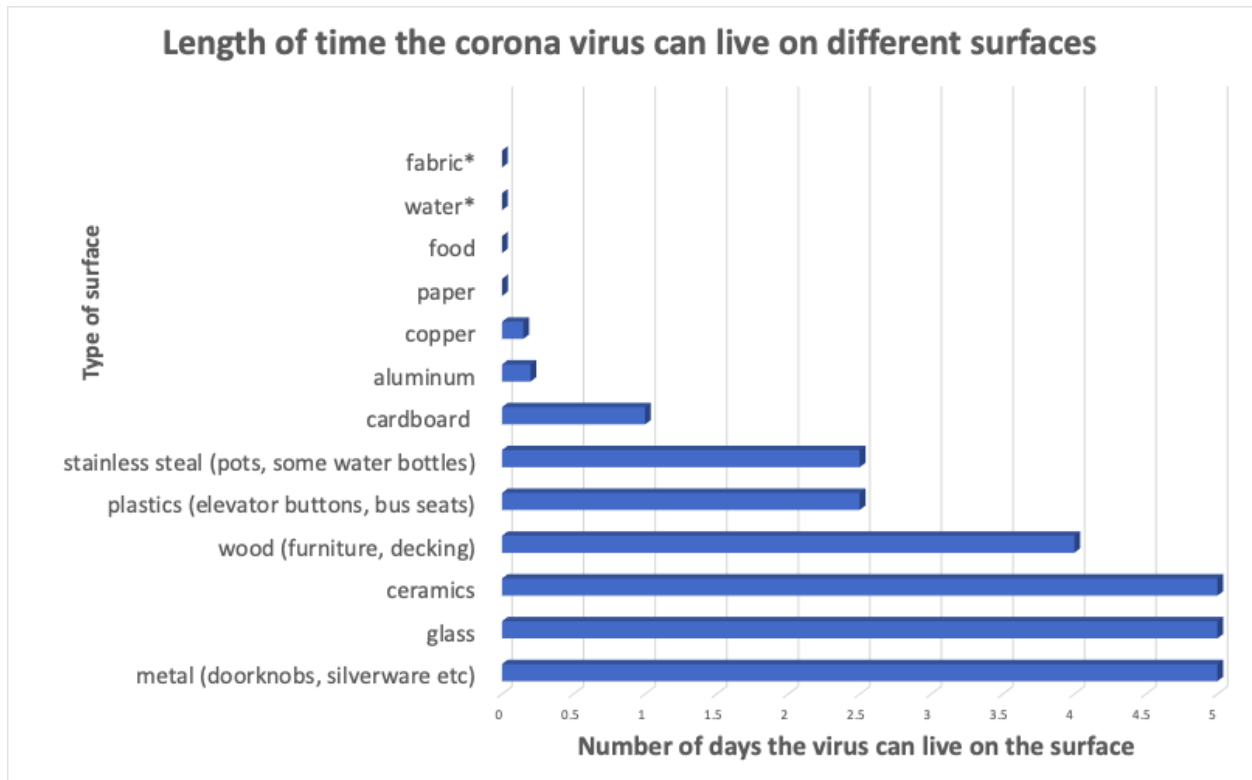
Note: The length of time the virus lives on paper varies depending on the strain of the virus. It can be not at all or up to 5 days. Both stainless steel and plastics can host the virus 2-3 days (not exactly 2.5 days as the chart would suggest).

*These values have not been tested but are suspected to be low.

What if my learners or I feel sick?

- Designate a room(s) in the school as an isolation room/wellness room for sick individuals to wait for their rides home. Schools with large populations can consider more than one room for this purpose.

- Clean and disinfect the area used by any individuals suspected of having COVID-19. This includes all surfaces within two metres/six feet of the ill person. Remove all items that cannot be cleaned (paper, books etc.), and store them in a sealed container for a minimum of three days.
- Teach appropriate and non-stigmatizing language and ensure students know how to describe symptoms of COVID-19 to tell a staff member immediately if they feel ill.
- Have a plan in place for your class in case you need to go home immediately (for yourself or to care for someone sent home).
- Ensure the area is cleaned immediately after the student with symptoms has gone home. Before the room is cleaned, place a sign on the door indicating it cannot be used. Remove the sign once the room is cleaned.

What kinds of records should I keep?
- Maintain and have available the following documents in case they are needed for case and contact tracing:
  - Class list, attendance record and seating chart for each cohort, including each student's name, date of birth and contact information.

Do you have any resources to help me share information with learners?

- Free posters to give guidance= scroll down to 'posters" on this page https://www.alberta.ca/k-to-12-school-re-entry-2020-21-school-year.aspx#masks
- Offer AHS parents guides to students they come in a variety of L1s which you can use to support learning in English same documents.(Scroll down to parent's guide on this page https://www.alberta.ca/k-to-12-school-re-entry-2020-21-school-year.aspx#masks

If I feel it is unsafe, can I refuse to work and have my job protected by OHS legislation? What does OHS Alberta have to say about returning to work under CoVid?

"If your employer has implemented reasonable controls to address the risk of COVID-19 exposure – such as those required or recommended by Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health – the dangerous condition associated with the virus should be addressed and it's unlikely that there will be a dangerous condition

under OHS legislation. If you still feel uncomfortable with those controls, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with your employer".

(p. 2) OHS Alberta (2020) COVID-19 INFORMATION OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR WORKERS DURING A PANDEMIC https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/194e93ad-31aa-4700-8fda-d89ab3c225a8/resource/005c0f0a-e04d-41de-b88a-a77a21dde8aa/download/lbr-covid-19-information-occupational-health-and-safety-guidance-for-workers-during-pandemic.pdf

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