

Bathroom and Handwashing Guidance

** subject to change **
Last Updated 8/6/20

Germ that make people sick may be present in feces (stool, poop, etc.) even when the person feels fine. There is substantial evidence that bacteria and viruses resulting in a variety of human illnesses, indicated by symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea, are transmitted through feces. There are other diseases such as hepatitis A, Brucellosis, and others that do not result in gastrointestinal symptoms but the germs are excreted through feces and transferred to others through fecal-oral routes of transmission.

While we know the virus that causes COVID-19 can be found in feces and urine from patients with coronavirus¹, it is unclear whether the virus in feces is infectious and whether this might be an additional source for transmission. One of the most effective strategies to prevent fecal-oral transmission is to implement sanitation and hygiene protocols. In terms of sanitation, the availability of flush toilets is the most effective. When toilets are flushed, a small plume of particles may result and reach heights of ~3ft before settling after about 1 minute^{2,3}.

Norovirus, which causes vomiting and diarrhea, has been detected on high touch surfaces (toilet seats, toilet flush handles, sink faucet handles and bathroom handles) in bathrooms that have become contaminated through contact with contaminated hands or with vomitus or feces either directly or from settled aerosolized particles⁴. At BNS, the toilets have been fit with lids and students will be encouraged to close the lid before flushing to prevent aerosolization. Toilet tissue could be used to reduce contact with germs on surfaces; however, this is not needed as handwashing after using the bathroom will remove toilet associated germs. Students will return to their classroom to wash hands with soap for 20 seconds⁵ under supervision of their classroom teacher and to avoid crowding in the bathroom sinks. For the purposes of the school environment it is not necessary that hand soaps used are labeled as antibacterial or antiseptic⁶. Paper towels should be used to dry hands as they offer additional physical removal of germs from hands that is superior to that offered by electronic hand-dryers⁷. Paper towels should be used to turn off the taps for sinks to prevent re-contamination of hands.

Teachers will review proper handwashing procedures with students multiple times at the beginning of the new academic year and review with students after prolonged school breaks (i.e. winter break)

Review of Recommendations:

- Toilets should be flushed with toilet lid lowered
- Individuals may use toilet tissue to lower the lid and press the handle if desired.
- Individuals should wash hands for 20 seconds using soap and water and should dry hands thoroughly using paper towels before leaving the bathroom.

Handwashing policies and guidelines

We recommend students wash their hands frequently, including:

- after using the bathroom;
- after contacting any high touch surface in their classrooms that is not their assigned chair, desk or school supplies;
- after coughing, sneezing or using a tissue;
- before touching their faces or masks;
- before eating or drinking.

Follow these five handwashing steps every time:

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum (don't sing) the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel and use the paper towel to turn the water faucet off.

Hand sanitizers may be used in between hand washing but are not a replacement for handwashing.

- Hand sanitizers do NOT get rid of all types of germs that make us sick.
- Hand sanitizers may not work when our hands are dirty (e.g., after playing outside) or greasy (e.g., after eating).
- Use only hand sanitizers that have 60% or more isopropyl alcohol or ethanol.
- Do not eat immediately after applying hand sanitizer, allow hands to dry before eating.

How to use hand sanitizer:

1. Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand
2. Rub hands together
3. Rub the gel all over the hand surfaces, including in between fingers
4. Allow product to dry, about 20 seconds

Sources:

¹Xiao F, Sun J, Xu Y, Li F, Huang X, Li H, et al. Infectious SARS-CoV-2 in feces of patient with severe COVID-19. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2020 Aug [June 30,2020]. <https://doi.org/10.3201/eid2608.200681>

²Li Y, Wang, J., Chen, X. Can a toilet promote virus transmission? From a fluid dynamics perspective. *Physics of Fluids* **32**, 065107 (2020); <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0013318>.

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/06/16/coronavirus-toilet-flushing/>

⁴Leone CM, Tang C, Sharp J, Jiang X, Fraser A. Presence of human noroviruses on bathroom surfaces: a review of the literature. *Int J Environ Health Res.* 2016 Aug; 26(4):420-32.

⁵<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

⁶<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/antibacterial-soap-you-can-skip-it-use-plain-soap-and-water>

⁷ Huang C, Ma W, Stack S. The hygienic efficacy of different hand-drying methods: a review of the evidence. *Mayo Clin Proc.* 2012;87(8):791-798. doi:10.1016/j.mayocp.2012.02.019