



**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 58 (NICOLA-SIMILKAMEEN)**

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

Stephen McNiven, B.Ed., M.A., Superintendent of Schools
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P.O. Box 4100, 1550 Chapman Street, Merritt, B.C., V1K 1B8, Phone: (250) 378-5161, Fax: (250) 378-6263

January 30, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

RE: Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

The B.C. Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, announced on January 28 that the first case of novel coronavirus has been confirmed in B.C. Further details from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education are available [here](#). We understand our students and parents may have questions about coronavirus.

We can assure you that we are in regular communication with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and our local health authority to make public health decisions, and to ensure students and employees are kept informed and safe. We will continue to be in close contact with public health officials and, with that in mind, would ask that you do not make assumptions about the risk of students or staff based on their ethnicity or travel history.

Fake news regarding coronavirus is starting to circulate on social media. We would encourage students, staff and their families to refer to official sources such as the BC Centre for Disease Control for the latest information and updates: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

Reducing the risk

The BC Centre for Disease Control recommends that to reduce the risk of exposure to novel coronavirus, employ the same measures that are taken in relation to colds and flu:

- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water (it is the single most effective way of reducing infection spread).
- Practice other good hygiene habits: do not touch your face/eyes/mouth with your hands and cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough (ideally with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched workspace surfaces.
- Maintain good general health (eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, exercise in moderation).
- Stay home if you are sick.
- A new toll-free phone number (1-833-784-4397) has been established to answer questions from Canadians about the 2019 novel coronavirus. Service is available from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. until January 29 and from 7 a.m. to midnight starting January 30 (Eastern Standard Time).

Further information about novel coronavirus is available on the BC Centre for Disease Control website.

Advice for students and families considering travel

- Students and families considering travel to and from China are encouraged to consult the Travel Health Notice (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories/pneumonia-china>) for China on travel.gc.ca regularly, as recommendations may change over the course of your travel as new information becomes available.

- No matter where students and families plan to travel, the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that they consult travel.gc.ca, which is the Government of Canada's official source of destination-specific travel information. It provides important advice to help travelers make informed decisions and travel safely while abroad.
- Students and their families should always tell their health care providers about their travel history if they become ill after returning to Canada.

We are hopeful that you will find the attached information helpful and if questions arise, please reach out to your health professional and/or follow the links in this document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Aziz', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Mr. Jameel Aziz
Assistant Superintendent