



March 13, 2020

Ref: 218344

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

As spring break begins, we want to ensure you have the latest information on BC's response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Yesterday, Health Minister Adrian Dix and Provincial Medical Health Officer (PHO) Dr. Bonnie Henry announced new actions and preventive measures.

Please be aware the Provincial Health Officer is advising against all non-essential travel outside of Canada, including the United States. If you do travel outside of Canada, you are asked to self-isolate (stay away from school or work) for 14 days upon your return to B.C. The self-isolation protocol is voluntary but public health officials hope all British Columbians will comply as part of their civic duty.

The Provincial Health Officer is also directing all community gatherings and events planned for 250 or more people be cancelled or postponed. This includes indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings or other similar events such as school musical theatre or concerts.

An important reminder, please ensure you and your children are washing hands frequently and if anyone in your family is sick, please stay home. If you or a family member may have been exposed to COVID-19, you should call your local primary care provider, or 811, to arrange for safe testing.

The health and safety of students, staff and our school community is our priority. At this time, the Provincial Health Officer advises school closures are not necessary. Dr. Henry adds schools help children stay safe by reinforcing frequent hand washing and other preventive measures. The Health Minister confirms there will be ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Education and education stakeholders over spring break to continue monitoring COVID-19 and BC's response to it.

We have implemented the guidance from the PHO regarding increased frequency of cleaning and increasing opportunities for students and staff to wash their hands as important ways of reducing the risk of transmitting this infection.

We are in a very challenging time and some of these asks may be difficult for you and your family. By taking these preventive steps together, public health officials aim to contain the spread of COVID-19 and to protect vulnerable people in our communities. It can be reasonably expected that other measures may be introduced. We will continue to monitor the situation daily and will do our best to keep you and your family updated on developments.

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There are daily news conferences held by the PHO and the Minister of Health. Their news releases can be found at: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/ministries/health>

The BC Centre for Disease Control is also frequently updating its COVID-19 information. For more information: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/novel-coronavirus-\(covid-19\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/novel-coronavirus-(covid-19))

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. MacDonald', with a stylized flourish at the end.

D. Scott MacDonald
Deputy Minister