



March 6th, 2020

Dear staff members, students and families,

As the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues around the world with new cases confirmed daily, the Conseil scolaire francophone (CSF) has been remaining vigilant, monitoring the situation in consultation with Regional Health Authorities and the Provincial Health Officer of British Columbia (PHO).

Fortunately, the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in British Columbia remains low. Nevertheless, with the rising number of reported cases elsewhere, there is cause for concern with respect to international travel.

With recent Government-issued travel warnings the CSF has had to make the difficult decision to cancel travel within Canada and overseas for an indefinite period.

What can we do now as a school district and a community to safeguard against the spread among students and families? At present the Public Health Agency of Canada and PHO do not recommend school closures as a strategy for preventing COVID-19.

The recommended approach is hand hygiene and appropriate respiratory etiquette. The best defence is to continue to educate staff, students and visitors to follow well-established hygiene practices, including handwashing, coughing into the elbow and staying at home if the following symptoms have been experienced within the past 24 hours: fever, vomiting, chills, tiredness and/or diarrhea.

Our District is following these steps and measures as identified in the Public Health Guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs (Feb 23, 2020). You can find the document produced by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control on our website under the Coronavirus section, Useful Links: <https://www.csf.bc.ca/coronavirus-2019-ncov-useful-links/>

Along with encouraging proper hand hygiene and staying home when unwell, **the PHO also advises travelers to conduct risk assessments in advance and consider postponing trips to impacted areas - while noting that impacted areas are changing as COVID-19 continues to evolve.**

It is our intent to share important links to help families make decision around travel. All current health-related travel notices can be found on the Government of Canada website at <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice>. The Government of Canada does caution that for all destinations, whether the risk is high or low, the decision to travel is yours and you are responsible for your personal safety abroad.

As a reminder, any student, staff or volunteer working in schools who is concerned that they may have been exposed to or are experiencing symptoms of the coronavirus should contact their primary care provider or local public health unit, or call 8-1-1 (HealthLink BC).

We encourage all families and our staff to monitor the situation, as well and gather as much information as necessary to make important decisions for your family, your home and your workplace. Here are two additional recommended links:

- Novel Coronavirus Q&A from HealthLinkBC: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus>; and
- BC Centre for Disease Control: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel)).

Respectfully,



Michel St-Amant
Superintendent