



February 13, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Novel Coronavirus

The Central Okanagan Public Schools is 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 are kept informed and safe with regard to the novel coronavirus (now officially named COVID-19 by the World Health Organization).

On February 12, 2020, Silvina Mema, Interior Health Medical Health Officer, issued a letter to Superintendents and School Principals providing an update on the novel coronavirus. This letter can be found on the School District website (www.sd23.bc.ca) under Documents & Publications. A letter dated February 7, 2020 from the Provincial Health Officer is also posted.

The Medical Health Officer is recommending:

- Students or staff who are returning from Hubei Province, China consider staying home for 14 days after they leave Hubei. They should monitor themselves daily for symptoms like fever or cough. Parents should assist children as needed. Those who develop symptoms should stay home and call their health-care provider or call 8-1-1 to discuss any need for testing and follow-up.
- Students or staff who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with the novel coronavirus consider staying home for 14 days after their last encounter. Individuals should monitor themselves daily for symptoms like fever or cough. Parents should assist children as needed. Those who develop symptoms should stay home and call their health-care provider or call 8-1-1 to discuss any need for testing and follow-up.
- Students or staff who have been in other parts of China (outside Hubei Province) should monitor themselves daily for symptoms like fever or cough for 14 days. Parents should assist children as needed. Those who develop symptoms should stay home and call their health-care provider or call 8-1-1 to discuss any need for testing and follow-up.

Misinformation is circulating on social media regarding the virus. Families are encouraged to refer to official sources. In British Columbia, the latest official updates are located on the BC Centre for Disease Control website (<http://www.bccdc.ca/about/news-stories/stories/2020/information-on-novel-coronavirus>). The public are also being asked to not make assumptions about the risk of students or staff based on their ethnicity or travel history.

Also, a toll free number (1-833-784-4397) has been established to answer questions from Canadians about the novel coronavirus. This service is available from 4:00 am to 9:00 pm PST.

On a final note, some tips to reduce your risk of contracting the flu, colds or the novel coronavirus:

- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.
- If a sink is not available, alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR) can be used to clean hands if they are not visibly soiled. If they are visibly soiled, using a wipe and then ABHR is effective.
- Do not touch your face/eyes/mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Regular household cleaning products are effective against most viruses.
- Stay home if you are sick and away from others so you don't pass it on.

If we take a few precautions, we can all remain healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kaardal
Superintendent of Schools/CEO