



Message to Parents Prior to Spring Break Regarding Coronavirus(COVID-19) March 12, 2020

As spring break approaches, we know that many families may be preparing to travel outside of Canada. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a concern for all of us and our top priority is the health and safety of all students.

Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) are similar to those for influenza or other respiratory illnesses. They can range from mild to severe and include fever, cough, difficulty breathing and pneumonia. We are working closely with Alberta Health Services and wanted to update you on the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) protocol that our Division is also following.

Our Division has been working closely with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and they are advising you to follow their guidelines, recognizing that the information is changing rapidly and must be checked day to day.

Travel to a high-risk location

Parents are encouraged to visit www.alberta.ca/COVID19 or www.ahs.ca/covid for guidance around prevention, testing and other useful information.

Travel advisories are issued by the federal government and can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>. In addition to travel advisories, this site also offers information on the health risks of travel specific to the evolving COVID-19 situation. Schools and families are encouraged to visit this site to help guide their decision on whether to continue with travel or adjust their travel plans.

As of March 10th, anyone returning from **Italy, Iran, Hubei province or a Grand Princess cruise** are at increased risk of COVID-19 infection. As a result, AHS asks that these families:

- self-isolate for 14 days when you return home, and children do not return to school.
- contact the school to inform them that your child will not be at school for 14 days,
- call Health Link at 811 if anyone in your family begins to exhibit the symptoms noted above.

Travel to other destinations

If you are travelling to any other location during spring break, check the AHS website (www.ahs.ca/covid) when you return to ensure that your destination has not been added to the list of high-risk destinations.

- If your location is considered high-risk upon your return, please self-isolate immediately and if you develop symptoms call Health Link at 811.
- If your location is not considered high-risk, monitor yourself for 14 days and if symptoms develop call Health Link at 811.

Travel by Cruise

Please note that the [Public Health Agency of Canada](http://www.canada.ca) is recommending that Canadians do not go on cruises.

Prevention

While the current risk of catching the virus in Alberta remains low, this may change in the coming weeks. The following steps are important in preventing the spread of common respiratory illnesses (such as influenza) as well as COVID-19 whether at home or while travelling:

- use good hygiene practices, such as frequent handwashing;
- cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Dispose of tissues immediately and wash your hands;
- avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill;
- don't share items that may have saliva on them such as drinking glasses and water bottles;
- clean high touch surfaces such as taps, doorknobs and counter tops frequently;
- contact your primary health provider or Health Link by calling 811 if you have questions or concerns about your health.

You may have questions about what it means when a student or staff member at a school is asked to self-isolate after being in close contact with a case of COVID-19. Self-isolation is a cautious approach and if that person has no symptoms, they are not considered to have exposed others to the virus. Other students do not need to be kept home. Health officials will already be ensuring that all appropriate precautions are being taken.

For our parent community, we have created a page on the Division website in which all of our current communication may be found, at <https://www.ecsd.net/News/Pages/Cornavirus-Update.aspx>.

We encourage you to visit this site before contacting your school or Division office with any questions.

Thank you for your support as we work together to ensure that all students and staff remain healthy and safe. We wish everyone a relaxing spring break! God Bless!