

March 12, 2020

Dear GVSD Parents and Guardians:

RE: COVID-19 Update for GVSD Families

As we head into spring break, we are aware there are heightened concerns in the current context of COVID-19. We have been receiving many enquiries about coronavirus and would like to reassure our families that student and staff safety is paramount. With new daily developments across the globe, nation, and local region—a confirmed case on Vancouver Island—we are taking measures to help minimize the surge of transmission.

The District has increased efforts to clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and continues to actively monitor the COVID-19 situation. We adhere to the recommendations of our Provincial Health Officer (PHO), the Ministries of Health and Education and the Government of Canada.

As we endeavor to best prepare for all possibilities, we believe all members of our learning community have an important role in helping us keep our schools healthy and safe. While there may be elements beyond our control, we understand that it takes a concerted effort to reduce the spread of a virus. It is important we are mindful of our own personal health and how we impact others.

We are continuing to ask families to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. In addition, we are asking families to talk to their children about the COVID-19 outbreak. We understand that this situation can be extremely stressful, especially for children. The CDC has many helpful facts and tips on how we can support children: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html

Further, if your family is traveling over the break, we strongly advise you continue to follow the advice from our PHO, Dr. Bonnie Henry, as things continue to evolve.

The World Health Organization has now declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic and the availability of health care services in some areas may be limited and travel restrictions may be put in place suddenly.

Travellers should check the latest travel notices and advisories on the Government of Canada's website before leaving the country: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

Canada currently has active COVID-19 travel advisories for:

- [China](#)
- [France](#)
- [Germany](#)
- [Hong Kong](#)
- [Iran](#)
- [Italy](#)
- [Japan](#)
- [Singapore](#)
- [South Korea](#)
- [Spain](#)

Cruise ships continue to be high-risk environments for transmission. The federal government recommends that Canadians avoid all cruise ship travel due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

People arriving in Canada from Hubei Province, China and Iran and Italy are being asked to stay home and self-isolate for 14 days and monitor closely for symptoms of illness.

It is being advised that British Columbians monitor their health while they are travelling and after they return. If you have any symptoms at all of a cold or influenza, even if they're mild, stay away from others. If you have been to areas, particularly where there has been transmission of COVID-19, then call your health care provider, call 8-1-1, call public health. Always tell health care providers about recent travel if you become ill after returning to Canada.

Below you will find a list of additional resources to help keep you informed over the break.

We hope that all families can find rest and relaxation during this time. Please take care of yourself and those closest to you.

Sincerely,



Shelley Green
Superintendent of Schools

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

One *Learning* Community



Useful Links

- Information about COVID-19, including advice and guidance to schools, is regularly updated on the BC Centre for Disease Control site: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19_schools_childcare_guidelines.pdf Please routinely check this site and its resources.
- All joint statements from Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister of Health Adrian Dix are posted here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/ministries/health>
- The Provincial Pandemic Coordination plan: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/pandemic-provincial-coordination-plan.pdf>
- KIDS and COVID-19 QA: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)#For--schools--and--childcare](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel)#For--schools--and--childcare)
- CBC Kids along with the PHO produced a kid-centric Q and A video about COVID-19: <https://www.cbc.ca/kidsnews/post/watch-coronavirus-facts-versus-fiction>
- Ministry of Health response plans - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/pandemic-influenza>
- Novel Coronavirus Q&A from HealthLinkBC: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus>
- 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))
- Government of Canada - Novel Coronavirus in China Travel Health Notice: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice/210>

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.