



**550 Poirier Street, Coquitlam, British Columbia V3J 6A7 • Phone 604-939-9201 • Fax: 604-939-7828**

March 13, 2020

To: All Parents/Guardians of School District 43

**Re: Spring Break and COVID-19 Update**

As the world continues to react to the rapidly changing situation we are experiencing with the emergence of COVID-19, we wanted to take a moment to share the latest information available to us with our SD43 families.

We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and are communicating regularly with health authorities and adhering to the recommendations of our Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, the Ministries of Health and Education and the Government of Canada.

**The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and Minister of Health announced new directives and measures**

**March 13, 2020:** (also see attached letter from Deputy of Education Minister, D. Scott MacDonald)

- The PHO advises that closing schools is not appropriate or advised at this time. Health Minister Dix added that public health officials will be working with stakeholders in the education sector during Spring Break to continue monitoring the pandemic and B.C.'s response to it.
- The PHO is advising against all non-essential travel outside Canada, including to the United States. She adds that if individuals do travel outside of Canada, they are asked to self-isolate and stay away from school or work for 14 days upon return.

Travellers should also understand that as global efforts to contain COVID-19 continue, the availability of health care services in some areas may be limited and travel restrictions may be put in place suddenly. People who are continuing with their travel plans should check the latest travel notices and advisories on the Government of Canada's website: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>.

British Columbians should continue to closely monitor their health. If you have any symptoms of a cold or influenza, even if they're mild, stay away from others. If you have been to areas where there has been known transmission of COVID-19 or around individuals that have had a confirmed diagnosis, call your health care provider, 8-1-1, or public health. Always tell health care providers about recent travel if you become ill after returning to Canada.

Currently there is no plan in place to extend Spring Break and the intention is to open schools on Monday, March 30. Should this change for any reason, SD43 is prepared to notify families and assist public health authorities in response plans. In the meantime, the district continues its commitment to maintaining high standards of cleanliness in schools and the replenishment of hygiene products. Custodial staff have undertaken efforts to focus on 'touch points' within schools in the preceding months and this practice continues. This means desks and surfaces that are touched or interacted with are 'high priority' for cleaning.

This is standard practice for cold and flu season but is, of course, of extra importance during the current COVID-19 situation. In any location that has reported an unconfirmed or undiagnosed illness, extra sanitization has been initiated out of an abundance of caution.

The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly but the district remains committed to sharing the most recent updates from health authorities and the Ministry of Education. Please see the attached message from the Office of the Deputy Minister of Education, D. Scott MacDonald.

Here are some useful links to assist you in staying informed:

- 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](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 Q&A: [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>

In this time of uncertainty, we must continue to keep ourselves calm and informed, follow the advice of health professionals and cooperate in our efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic and health crisis.

Sincerely,



Patricia Gartland  
Superintendent/CEO