

March 13, 2020

To: All Parents

From: Wilco Tymensen, Superintendent

The purpose of this letter is to convey information regarding COVID 19 as it relates to the health and wellbeing of your child at school. The letter contains information about (1) what actions Horizon is taking to respond to COVID 19, (2) returning from travel and/or known contact with COVID 19, and (3) where families can go for further information.

1. Horizon Actions

Horizon remains committed to ensuring student safety and well-being. We will continue to take guidance and direction from Alberta Health Services and government agencies who are tasked with providing expert advice and leading the response for this pandemic. Horizon is undertaking the following steps to address COVID 19

- Following advice from Chief Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health Services, and Alberta Education
- Encouraging staff and students that if they develop symptoms – cough, fever or difficulty breathing – stay home and call Health Link 811 for instructions and testing. Do not go to the ER or doctor's office.
- Enhancing frequency of school sanitization
- Although hand sanitizer is extremely difficult to come by and may not be readily available on a go forward basis, additional supplies are already on order and Horizon will be restocking schools as soon as it arrives. (hopefully next week)
- We have acquired a new sanitizer dispenser system that puts an electronic (static) charge on the sanitizer before application. Our maintenance staff has already been trained so that it can be incorporated into our cleaning procedures immediately. This will enhance the speed and efficiency of schools sanitizations.
- We have communicated with caretakers and requested that high touch surfaces be cleaned more thoroughly on a daily basis. (e.g. door knobs, urinal/toilet handlers, drinking fountains) and that bleach sanitization practices be enhanced.

- Schools have been provided with posters outlining how to properly wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, and how to cover your mouth when coughing, and asked schools to engage in discussions with students and staff about how to protect yourself and others:
 - use good hygiene practices, such as frequent handwashing
 - cover coughs and sneezes
 - avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
 - stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill
 - if you have symptoms, stay home and call Health Link 811 for instructions
- Ensuring that no more than 250 individuals are in the same room at any given time as per Alberta's new public health restrictions (see information below).
- Regularly updating staff and families

2. Travel

- The Board has banned all international travel for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year
- The Board is encouraging staff to not engage in personal international travel
- Division is cancelling any international delegations who are currently not in Canada
- Reminding returning families that Effective March 12, all Albertans currently outside Canada should self-isolate for 14 days when they return.
- You may have holidays planned over the Easter break that take your child(ren) out of country or to a region in Canada that becomes one of substantive risk of contraction. As such, all parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the links below regarding self-monitoring and self-isolating. Parents/guardians are reminded that circumstances associated with risk and exposure change rapidly, including travel advisories.

3. Further Information

- If the COVID-19 pandemic takes hold in southern Alberta and spreads, school closure is guided by Alberta Health Services under the Public Health Act. This is not a probable outcome, but it is a possibility. The purpose of closing schools will be to keep children and staff from getting sick. If schools are closed, staff and children are to stay at home. Parents may want to begin thinking about what is necessary for child care purposes in the event that a school is closed.
- During a pandemic event, students may be at home for a variety of reasons: self-isolation, Health Services compelled isolation or quarantine, confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or the parent has decided that they do not want to send their child to school until post-pandemic times. It may be that some teachers have seamless online access to learning because of the nature of their instruction, but it is not the expectation that teachers will put together packages of homework for students and it is not the expectation that teachers must establish or keep up

some sort of online learning system. Due to the nature of a pandemic outbreak, teachers will advance curriculum programs where possible. Programming will be adapted to assist returning students that have been absent.

- We continue to receive daily communication and will remain vigilant.

Update on COVID-19 in Alberta

March 12, 2020

Alberta is adopting aggressive new public health measures to help limit the spread of the novel coronavirus, officially known as COVID-19.

Effective immediately, the Alberta government is asking all large gatherings or international events in the province to be cancelled and advising Albertans against travel outside of the country.

Four new cases of COVID-19 have now been confirmed in Alberta, bringing the total number in the province to 23, all travel-related. One patient continues to recover in hospital, while all others are in isolation at home.

"We are doing everything possible to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our province. The virus is spreading rapidly and is now a global threat. We are implementing these new measures to slow its spread and limit the risks in the weeks ahead. Protecting the health of Albertans is, and always will be, our top priority."

Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Chief Medical Officer of Health

"The coming weeks are vital in our fight to protect Alberta from COVID-19. These are serious steps, and ones we do not take lightly. I am calling on every Albertan and organization to assist our public health efforts and do their very best to comply with the public health guidance. It is critical that Albertans come together to do our part in keeping Albertans healthy and safe."

Tyler Shandro, Minister of Health

New public health restrictions

Alberta is asking organizers to cancel any events that have more than 250 attendees. This includes large sporting events, conferences and community events. It does not extend to places of worship, grocery stores, airports or shopping centers.

Any event that has more than 50 attendees and expects to have international participants, or involves critical infrastructure staff, seniors, or other high-risk populations should also be cancelled.

Events that do not meet these criteria can proceed, but risk mitigation must be in place, such as sanitizer stations and distancing between attendees.

At this time, schools and daycares can remain open but steps should be taken to ensure that no more than 250 individuals are in the same room at any given time.

Travel outside of the country is not being recommended at this time. Given the rapid global spread of the virus, it is no longer possible to assess health risks for the duration of the trip.

For the most up to date information about novel coronavirus (COVID-19), visit the following websites.

- Coronavirus Information for Albertans – Alberta Health
<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>
- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Alberta Health Services
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>
- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs for Public – Alberta Health Services
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-2019-public-faq.pdf>
- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Travel Advice
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>
- Novel CTalking to Children about COVID 19
[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource?fbclid=IwAR3nxuMJ6PgdZ0gwC4PkJrVfBQLRv7b_Geac6xraTr4LKWRQWF9CWl5dmFU](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource?fbclid=IwAR3nxuMJ6PgdZ0gwC4PkJrVfBQLRv7b_Geac6xraTr4LKWRQWF9CWl5dmFU)