

March 6, 2020

Subject: Coronavirus (COVID-19): For Schools returning after March Break

Dear Parents / Guardians / Students / Staff,

This letter is to provide you with **the most recent guidance** about what is being done to protect those who have recently arrived in New Brunswick from affected areas and to protect our communities.

To date, there have been isolated imported cases in Canada with primarily mild illness but no widespread human-to-human transmission. COVID-19 is known to be spread from human to human primarily while the case is symptomatic and during close contact with others.

In line with current Canadian public health expert consensus, all travelers returning to Canada from outside the country will be provided direction regarding self-monitoring for symptoms for 14 days and directed to stay home and call 811 should symptoms develop. Currently the only exception to this is travelers from Iran and the Chinese province of Hubei, who are asked to self-isolate for 14 days regardless of symptoms. For more information see [Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Travel Advice](#).

There is currently no widespread transmission of COVID-19 in Canada; therefore, the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that schools take standard respiratory illness precautions, the same precautions that are recommended every year for cold and influenza season. At present, school closures are not recommended for the prevention of COVID-19.

Please refer to [Public Health Guidance for Schools \(K-12\) and Childcare Programs\(COVID-19\)](#).

Symptoms currently associated with COVID-19 are similar to many common respiratory illnesses (e.g. influenza) that may be circulating through schools. Key strategies to prevent and control respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, in school include:

- For students and staff who are ill with fever and/or infectious respiratory symptoms, staying home from school
- Consistently and frequently practicing good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.
- Ensuring regular and routine environmental cleaning of the facility.



It is important for administrators to understand the usual absenteeism patterns of their school and notify Regional Public Health as per the usual process when absenteeism of students/children or staff is greater than would be expected, or severe illness is observed.

Please take the time to reassure students that they are safe and there are many things they can do to stay healthy:

- **Hand washing:** Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol- based hand sanitizer (minimum content of 70% alcohol is important), especially after coughing or sneezing.
- **Cough/sneeze etiquette:** Cough and sneeze into arm or tissue.
- **Stay home when sick:** Students should tell parents if not feeling well, and together, make a plan to stay home from school.
- **Keep clean:** Keep hands away from face and mouth.
- **Stay healthy:** Stay healthy by eating healthy foods, keeping physically active, getting enough sleep.

For more information on the coronavirus www.gnb.ca/coronavirus.

Sincerely,



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Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health

