



March 12, 2020

Dear PVNC Families,

We wanted to provide you an update on the Board's continued efforts to monitor and plan for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as we head into the March Break.

As the virus continues to dominate news coverage, we understand that this issue is on the minds of our students, parents and staff and that it may be cause for anxiety. We want to reassure you that we are working closely with the three public health units in our jurisdiction to ensure we receive and can communicate the [most up-to-date information about this coronavirus](#).

Earlier this week, I initiated our Emergency Preparedness Committee and we are ready to act on any control measures or recommendations to school operations as directed by local, provincial or federal health authorities. The safety and well-being of our students and staff is always our main priority.

We know many families will be enjoying vacations abroad in coming days and students and staff will be returning to school following March Break vacations.

It is important that families travelling to international destinations, particularly travel in affected areas, stay informed about the precautions they should take upon returning. [Travel advisories](#) are being updated daily.

### **Current affected areas**

The following geographic areas are identified as affected areas as of March 12, 2020:

- ❖ China (mainland)
- ❖ Hong Kong
- ❖ Iran
- ❖ Italy
- ❖ Japan
- ❖ Singapore
- ❖ South Korea

### **Travellers returning from affected areas**

Travellers who have returned from Hubei province (China), Iran and Italy, where returning travellers are advised to self-isolate should:

- ❖ contact their local public health unit within 24 hours of arriving in Canada
- ❖ stay at home and avoid close contact with others, including those in their home, for a total of 14 days from the date they left Hubei province (China), Iran or Italy
- ❖ contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or their local public health unit if they experience symptoms of the 2019 novel coronavirus

**Travellers who have returned from areas under a travel health advisory for COVID-19 should:**

- ❖ monitor themselves for symptoms of the 2019 novel coronavirus for 14 days after leaving the affected area
- ❖ contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or their local public health unit if they experience symptoms of the 2019 novel coronavirus
- ❖ Learn about [travel advisories](#) related to the 2019 novel coronavirus.

The World Health Organization has declared the spread of COVID-19 a pandemic, an infectious disease that spreads quickly around the world.

However, it is important to reiterate that Public Health continues to assure us that the risk of becoming ill from COVID-19 in Ontario currently remains low. Public health authorities continue to stress the importance of practising everyday prevention actions to reduce your risk of respiratory illnesses.

**These precautions include:**

- ❖ **Hand hygiene** - thoroughly washing hands with plain soap and water is recommended in school settings as the mechanical action of it is effective at removing visible soil as well as microbes. In instances where hand washing sinks are not available, supervised use of alcohol based hand sanitizers (ABHS) containing at least 60% alcohol may be considered.
- ❖ **Respiratory etiquette** - respiratory etiquette in school settings includes covering the mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow, and disposing of used tissues in a plastic-lined waste container, followed by hand hygiene.
- ❖ **If you are ill with any flu-like or cold symptoms, stay home** - as always, we are asking students and staff who are ill to remain at home until they are feeling better. As is our normal practice, we continue to monitor student and staff absences daily and our schools keep Public Health informed of any significant spikes in absenteeism due to illness.

Since January, we have been undertaking our Proactive Outbreak Cleaning Protocol in all of our schools, which involves antiseptic cleaning of all touch points and surfaces. We have purchased extra equipment and are supplementing custodial staff where needed to maintain our focus on this very important process. We are also supporting schools to ensure they are well stocked with hand soap and hand sanitizer.

Finally, we know our students may be experiencing heightened levels of worry associated with COVID-19. To support parent conversations at home, we would like to provide this resource: <http://bit.ly/COVID-19ParentResource>.

Together, we will continue to work to keep our students and staff safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Michael Nasello  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

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