

Tuesday, March 3, 2020

To All Parents/Guardians and Staff:

We wanted to provide this update on our continued monitoring and planning for novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

We understand and appreciate that this issue is on the minds of our students, parents and staff.

First and foremost, please be assured that the safety and well-being of our students and staff is always our main priority.

We are following this issue closely, and we are working in cooperation with our local health units. As we do when addressing all broad-based community health issues, we rely on local health authorities for advice, counsel and guidance as we move forward.

We understand, however, that there may be heightened apprehension or concern in our school communities.

Here are the latest updates on this issue:

- We are ready and able to take whatever action health authorities recommend to reduce the risk to our school communities. As of yesterday, Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, has stated that there remains a low risk for Ontarians to contract COVID-19.
- On Friday of last week, the Government of Canada released a Public Health Guidance for Schools (K-12) and Childcare Programs to support the prevention and management of COVID-19 in schools and childcare settings. We have reviewed this document closely and our school operations continue to be in line with this guideline. Most importantly, the guideline recommends:

“that schools take standard respiratory illness precautions, the same precautions that are recommended every year for cold and influenza season.”

- Hand hygiene – the most important recommendation from health authorities is to be vigilant in regular hand washing. As we always do during the seasonal flu season, we continue to emphasize with students the importance of regular, thorough hand washing and good personal hygiene.
- We are encouraging everyone to wash hands well and often with soap and water, and use “cover your cough” techniques. This includes coughing into your sleeve or arm. We ask all our parents to please reinforce that message with children at home.
- Increased Cleaning Measures – Our custodians always provide very thorough and effective cleaning and disinfecting of schools. To respond to the current situation, we are putting in place increased cleaning measures, specifically on high-touch surfaces. As part of our planning, we have also confirmed with our cleaning product supplier that the disinfectant we use in our schools is effective against a wide variety of viruses and bacteria, including COVID-19.
- Monitoring student and staff absences - As always, we are asking students and staff who are ill to remain at home until they are feeling better. If you are experiencing severe flulike symptoms, please contact a health professional. As is our normal practice, we continue to monitor student and staff absences daily. We initiate additional sanitation procedures in schools whenever there are higher rates of

absences. To date, we have not experienced school absences beyond the normal pattern of seasonal illnesses.

Further information on this issue is available online on our website, www.kprschools.ca, including connections with local and provincial health units.

Most importantly, students who are sick should be kept home, and not attend either regular school or before/after school programs until they are free of symptoms. Together, we will work to keep our students and staff safe and healthy.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jennifer Leclerc
Director of Education