



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 64 (GULF ISLANDS)

112 Rainbow Road, Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 2K3
T: (250) 537-5548 F: (250) 537-4200 W: sd64.bc.ca

March 12, 2020

Dear parents, caregivers, and families of Gulf Islands School District,

With Spring Break upon us, I would like to take this opportunity to address concerns related to novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and procedures to help us all navigate this complex and rapidly changing situation.

Yesterday, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak to be a global pandemic. Please know that School District 64 is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and is operating under the guidance and recommendation of our Provincial Health Office, the Ministries of Health and Education, and the Government of Canada. To assist school districts in ensuring the safety of students and staff, the following legislation provides direction and authority for action:

- Federal Government
 - The *Quarantine Act* provides the authority for Border Services to screen travelers entering/returning to Canada and to impose quarantine as necessary.
- Provincial Government
 - The *Public Health Act* empowers the Public Health Officer to enact orders for the response and treatment of communicable diseases. The Public Health Officer has the authority to close schools in response to public health emergencies.
 - The *School Act* requires that school districts continue to provide an educational program to students where attendance is disrupted due to illness or school closure on the authority of the School Medical Officer/Minister of Health.

The safety of students and staff is our top priority. The District is requesting that, while on Spring Break and before returning to school/work after the break, you regularly check-in with the following:

- the SD64 website for COVID-19 updates (sd64.bc.ca/coronavirus)
- your email for correspondence from your school principal / site supervisor

At this time, the Government of Canada has issued travel health notices for China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Spain, and is recommending that all non-essential travel to China, Iran, and Italy (countries identified as Level 3 risk) as well as all cruise ship travel be avoided. These lists are expected to grow as COVID-19 exposure increases globally. If you are planning to travel out of country, please check the [Canada Travel Health Notices](#) website for the most up-to-date information. Please keep in mind, that if you do choose to travel abroad, you may encounter quarantines, travel restrictions, limited access to health care services in some regions, and potential requirement for self-isolation upon return depending on how things progress in some regions.

Precautions we all can take to help minimize risk of infection are:

- Wash hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze into arm or tissue
- Stay home if not feeling well
- Keep hands away from face and mouth
- Eat healthy, stay well-rested, and keep physically active

If you believe you or someone you know has been exposed to, or is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, be sure to contact a primary health care provider, the local public health office, or call 811.

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I have included a list of resources below to provide more information as we all continue to monitor the situation.

Thank you for your time and understanding. I wish you all a safe and enjoyable Spring Break.

Sincerely,

Scott Benwell, PhD
Superintendent/CEO

More Information:

BC Centre for Disease Control: Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):
[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

Government of Canada Travel – Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Travel advice
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

HealthLinkBC: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus>

FAQ on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) for Children and Students) – Provincial Health Office and BC Centre for Disease Control:
<http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19%20QA%20for%20kids%20Feb%202020.pdf>

Province of British Columbia Pandemic Provincial Coordination Plan
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/provincial-emergency-planning/pandemic-provincial-coordination-plan.pdf>