

March 12, 2020

Dear Parents,

Yesterday the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic. It is important to note that the designation of a pandemic is a measure of the worldwide prevalence of a new disease. It doesn't change the nature of the risk posed by coronavirus and the BCCDC continues to categorize the risk of spread of the virus as low.

Along with reinforcing the usual preventative strategies, the BCCDC is asking British Columbians to "take additional care or seniors and people with compromised immune systems" as these are the most at risk for serious illness as a result of the virus.

In the news, there is no shortage of information on major cities in Europe and the US closing school districts, limiting public gatherings, and cancelling sporting events and concerts. In the last number of days there have been coronavirus-related school closures in the Lower Mainland. It is important to note that school closures in Vancouver were related to contact with a person who had tested positive for the virus; none of the school closures were at the request of, or in consultation with, public health officials.

Will our school close?

The working expectation is that our school will continue to operate as usual.

It is possible that our school may close if British Columbia's public health officials order the temporary closure of all public facilities where people congregate, including schools, in an attempt to slow the spread and impact of the virus.

It is possible circumstances may cause a temporary, incidental closure of our school. The Head of School, in consultation with provincial health officials, will make this type of decision.

We are making plans in the event we are required to close. We are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our students, staff and families. If we need to close the school for any period of time we will:

- Communicate regularly with our community via direct emails, the school app, and our website
- Continue to offer an adjusted school program either online, through project-based assignments, or other means. This will be communicated directly to students through Moodle.
- Track and monitor information from public health officials including the BCCDC, BC's provincial health officer and Vancouver Coastal Health
- Ensure we take appropriate cleaning protocols to ensure the school is ready to re-open

What can I do right now?

Along with reinforcing for your children prevention strategies like hand-washing, respiratory etiquette, and social distancing, consider:

- Stay home when you are sick, and keep your children home if they are sick (even if there is no fever)
- Possible child-care needs in the event of a school closure. There may be little to no notice of the school closing.

- Reassure your children that COVID-19 does not have serious implications for young people and that preventative measures are about minimizing the spread of the virus and protecting those who are vulnerable (seniors and immunocompromised people)
- Look to reliable sources for information like [BCCDC](#), [Vancouver Coastal Health](#), [BC Ministry of Health](#)

What about teachers or families traveling?

If you are considering traveling in the next few weeks or during the Passover Break, the BCCDC is asking British Columbians to monitor their health while traveling and after they return. Those who have symptoms at all of a cold or flu, even if they are mild, should stay away from others.

Canada has active COVID-19 travel advisories for China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Spain. Those with upcoming plans to travel should consider that travel advisories can change during their trip. Also, the federal government has recommended that Canadians avoid all cruise ship travel.

What is happening at school now?

The school monitors health information daily to ensure we are up to date on any developments and that we are implementing practices to maintain a healthy environment for our staff and students. We have updated our cleaning practices to disinfect more frequently common surfaces like door handles, stair rails and counters. We have increased our signage in all washrooms to remind students to wash their hands and all classrooms have disinfectant wipes. Last Friday, we had a school-wide assembly to remind students of all preventative measures to keep themselves (and others) healthy.

Moving forward, we will continue to communicate information regularly and as needed.

Best Regards,

Alex Monchamp
Deputy Head of School