

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,



Dr. Cristin Muecke, MD, MSc, FRCPC
Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health



**Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Educational Services Division**

P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1
Tel.: 506 453-3678
Fax: 506 457-4810

Date: March 6, 2020
To: Parents, Guardians
From: Dominic Cardy, Minister
Subject: COVID - 19

As an additional precautionary measure, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will require all children, students, staff, volunteers and family members of those individuals who have travelled to the following countries or regions to avoid any public school, early learning facilities, or school district offices for fourteen days from their date of their return to New Brunswick, beginning Saturday, March 7, 2020.

Those countries or regions are those at a Level 2 or 3 risk level, as assessed by the Government of Canada. As of March 6, 2020, the following countries or region are included:

- China
- Iran
- Japan
- Northern Italy
- South Korea
- Hong Kong
- Singapore

As an increased level of precaution, those who have travelled within any part of Italy will be required to follow the same directive for the countries listed above.

This list will be updated as countries are added or removed from the Government of Canada Travel Advisory page (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice>). Additional geographic restrictions may be added by the department as the situation progresses. This will remain in effect until June 30, 2020, but may be cancelled early if there are no countries listed as Covid-19 risks on the relevant page, or at the discretion of the Minister.

Additional information concerning thresholds required to cause schools or early learning centres to close, and to arrange for out-of-school learning for students in such situations, and other potential impacts of COVID-19, will be shared in the coming days. This would include early learning facilities as well. Parents should be prepared to find alternate child care options.

We ask that those who are excluded follow the Public Health Agency of Canada advice:

- Monitor your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing;
- Avoid places you cannot easily separate yourself from others if you become ill;
- To further protect those around you, wash your hands often and cover your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing or sneezing.

These additional measures are being taken by the department to address anxiety in our schools, early learning facilities and communities, increase the safety of staff, children and students, and to ensure that we have taken all necessary means to respond to the current situation. Today, with no cases reported, there is no reason to close our schools and childcare centres but every reason to begin to take these precautions.

If you start having symptoms of COVID-19, isolate yourself from others as quickly as possible. Immediately call a health care professional or TeleCare 811. Describe your symptoms and travel history. They will provide advice on what you should do.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will field questions around school policy, but all other questions concerning COVID-19 should be directed to the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

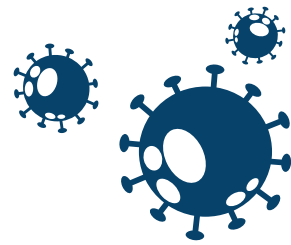
For more information on COVID-19, please visit canada.ca/coronavirus or call 1 833 784-4397 or www.gnb.ca/coronavirus.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dominic Cardy". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Dominic Cardy
Minister

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVICE



PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM GETTING SICK:



Wash your hands often



Elbow cough/sneeze



Avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth with hands



Cough in tissues and throw away



Stay home if you are sick



Avoid contact with sick person



Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available

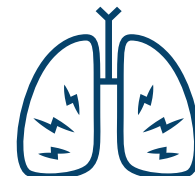
SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:



Fever



Cough



Difficulty breathing

FEELING SICK OR HAVE CONCERNS?

CALL **TELE-CARE 8-1-1 BEFORE** YOU PRESENT AT YOUR PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE OR THE EMERGENCY ROOM

For the latest information visit: www.gnb.ca/coronavirus