



March 11, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

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

We understand and appreciate that many families continue to feel some anxiety about this illness. It is important to note that Public Health continues to assure us that the risk of becoming ill from COVID-19 remains low in Ontario. We are following this issue closely, and we are working in cooperation with our local health units.

Some of you will also have seen that the World Health Organization has today declared the spread of COVID-19 a pandemic. A pandemic is an infectious disease that spreads quickly around the world.

It is important to note that health authorities continue to stress the same precautions to support our health, which are those which are recommended every year for cold and influenza season. These include:

- Hand hygiene – the most important recommendation from health authorities is to be vigilant in regular hand washing.
- Coughing into your sleeve or arm. We ask all our parents to please reinforce that message with children at home.
- Not touching your face
- Staying home if you are ill.

To support parent conversations at home about COVID-19, we have developed a tip sheet which we have attached. Please also find below important information on March break travel.

Further to this, I wanted to provide the following information:

- Beginning last week we initiated our Pandemic Emergency Management Committee to manage our operational response to this issue. The guiding principle of our work in this area is to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and staff is always our main priority.

As part of this work, we are prepared to adopt any measures or adjustments to school operations that are recommended by health authorities.

- Increased Cleaning Measures – Our custodians continue to have in place increased cleaning measures, specifically on high-touch surfaces. As part of our planning, we have also confirmed

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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. 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.

- We are monitoring student and staff absences daily. 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.
- While health officials continue to maintain that proper hand washing is the key to prevention of illness, our first order of additional hand sanitizers are being delivered to all schools tomorrow.

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

March Break

With March break approaching, many families have questions about international travel and precautions required upon returning from travel. As always, we take our direction in this matter from our local, regional and national health authorities.

Please find attached a communication from the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge Health Unit with some information about avoiding illness, and guidelines regarding travel.

Along with all our public health partners, we want to emphasize the following guidelines for students, staff and families.

Any International Travel

Upon return, all travelers are advised to:

- Monitor their health for flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, and difficulty breathing) for 14 days upon return; and
- If flu-like symptoms develop, contact their local health unit (contact information below).

Travel to China, Iran or Italy

If you or your family have returned from China, Iran or Italy in the last 14 days:

- Stay at home and avoid close contact with others, including those in your home, for 14 days after leaving the impacted area AND contact your local health unit for further instructions;
- If you notice flu-like symptoms (fever, cough and difficulty breathing), contact your health unit immediately.

While the risk to our local community remains low, we are committed to working closely with our public health partners, students, families and staff, to ensure safety and wellness.

Please visit [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://www.ontario.ca/coronavirus) for more information about COVID-19 symptoms and self-isolation advice.

For medical advice, you may also contact Telehealth Ontario (a free, confidential service that provides health advice) at 1-866-797-0000. A Registered Nurse will take your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Public Health Contact Information

Durham Region Public Health - 1-866-888-4577

<https://www.durham.ca/en/regional-government/public-health.aspx>

Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge Health Unit - 1-866-888-4577, ext. 5020

<https://www.hkpr.on.ca/>

Peterborough Public Health - 705-743-1000

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/>

Hastings Prince Edward Public Health - 613-966-5500

<https://hpepublichealth.ca/>