



March 13, 2020

Att: Parents and Guardians of Western School Division Students

Cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) were announced in Manitoba yesterday morning. We are moving to the response stage of dealing with coronavirus (COVID-19). We have been advised by Public Health that coronavirus (COVID-19) is almost exclusively spread by people who are showing symptoms. We have also been told that the majority of people who contract coronavirus (COVID-19) experience mild to moderate symptoms and recover. Prevention is used to protect the spread to vulnerable people and reduce the demands on the medical system for those that will require medical care. We have received guidelines for schools from Manitoba Health and Manitoba Education. The full information from Manitoba Health can be found at <https://www.manitoba.ca/health/coronavirus/public.html#11>.

Decisions regarding closing schools will come under direction from Manitoba Health. This afternoon the Province announced that schools will be closed effective Monday, March 23 until April 10. School is to resume on April 13, 2020.

We have activated our Pandemic Plan AP 1-701 which can be found on our webpage here:

<https://www.westernsd.mb.ca/Division/AdminProcedures/Documents/AP%201-701%20EMERGENCY%20PREPAREDNESS%20PLANNING-PANDEMIC%20PLANNING%20GUIDELINES.pdf>

With these recommendations in mind, we are taking the following steps:

If your child is ill

- If your child feels unwell, especially if they are showing symptoms such as coughing or fever, please keep your child at home. See the Coronavirus Fact Sheet for common symptoms and further information <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/factsheets/coronavirus.pdf>. Contact Health Links, who will assist you regarding the next steps and testing. To speak to a Health Links - Info Santé registered nurse, please call 204-788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257.
- If a child appears ill at school, parents will be called to pick up their child.

Prevention measures at school

- Increased handwashing routines will be in place.
- Continued reminders to use tissues and cough/sneeze into arm.
- Increased cleaning routines on high contact surfaces, including busses.

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- Social distancing: large group activities and events are cancelled until further notice. (e.g. assemblies, field trips and sporting events)
- Cancellation of outside user groups using the school until further notice.
- Further decisions regarding closing schools will come under direction from Manitoba Health.
- Additional information will be available on our website by early next week.

Travel

Following Manitoba Health recommendations:

- If your family is travelling in the coming weeks or has returned from travel, Public Health advises that you self-monitor for symptoms and stay home if any symptoms occur.
- If you are returning from high risk areas – such as Italy, Hubei, and Iran – stay home for 14 days and self-isolate.
- We will continue to follow Manitoba Health advice on travel. Currently, they are recommending no unnecessary travel and that families who do travel should self-monitor and/or self-isolate after travel.

Communication

This is a challenging time for everyone. We will make every effort to continue to provide a calm and nurturing environment for our students, with regular routines and learning. It is important that we are reassuring – especially with our younger students – and that we maintain community connections. Information and recommendations are changing rapidly but we will keep you informed as the situation develops. A coronavirus (COVID-19) information page will be available on our website by early next week with links to Manitoba Health information.

Thank you for your patience and support. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Principal.

Stephen Ross
Superintendent of Schools / CEO
Western School Division

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