



Evergreen School Division

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March 15, 2020

To: Evergreen Community
From: Roza Gray, Superintendent
Re: **COVID-19: PUBLIC UPDATE #3 (REVISED)**

The COVID 19 situation is rapidly evolving. This letter summarizes current information, planning underway and where families can get more information.

Are schools open?

This week, schools are open with regular class instruction. Government health and education officials announced that effective Monday, March 23rd, classes will be suspended for students across Manitoba until Friday, April 10th 2020. This action is a proactive measure to help reduce the potential spread of COVID-19.

What does 'suspended classes' mean?

This means that although students will not attend school, all staff have been asked to be in attendance to support students' continued learning at home. Staff are working on developing lessons and resources to send home by the end of the week to help parents/guardians support their child's continued learning.

What will teachers teach about COVID 19?

All teachers are being asked to begin the day tomorrow by presenting scientific facts regarding the virus and actions that individuals can take to stay safe. Age appropriate lessons and resources will be shared with teachers today and throughout the week.

How will schools address students' feelings about this pandemic?

Resources regarding appropriate responses to anxiety will be shared with all staff. A useful link for parents (which includes video & text) is <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

What is happening about those who are sick and come to school?

Staff and students who are exhibiting symptoms of the cold or flu are asked to stay home. If a child becomes ill or is displaying symptoms at school, parents/guardians will be contacted and required to pick up their child as soon as possible.

How will schools implement safety strategies to prevent spread while students are in school?

The Provincial Public Health Office has advised the following measures which will be in place in all Evergreen Schools

- Increased handwashing routines
- Continued reminders to cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing/sneezing, or coughing/sneezing into sleeve
- Avoiding/reducing close contact within two metres (social distancing)
- Enhanced cleaning measures in schools and buses, especially for high contact surfaces

Is Evergreen stocked with adequate cleaning supplies?

Yes, we currently have enough inventory to take care of all cleaning procedures necessary to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.



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What kind of events are being cancelled?

All field trips, sporting events, assemblies, extra-curricular activities, guest presentations, professional development sessions, and community activities in school spaces are temporarily cancelled

Are buses running this week?

At this time, buses are scheduled to run to and from school at the start and end of the day. Buses during the school day for various programs (such as vocational programs or coral/band) may be cancelled. Information will follow from schools in the next few days.

What about the music learning & cultural experience which is scheduled for Chicago in May?

At this time, the trip is not cancelled. By mid April relevant factors will be reconsidered and a decision will be made regarding the status of the trip.

What if I recently returned from a trip?

The Manitoba government is now advising Divisions that all individuals returning from international travel are to **self quarantine and self monitor for symptoms of COVID-19** (fever, cough or difficulty breathing) for 14 days after returning to Canada. Please do not attend school/work until this time of quarantine is completed. Contact medical help if you develop symptoms (ie. fever, cough, difficulty breathing)

What if a member of my household has recently returned from an international trip?

At this time, Manitoba Health has advised that members of the same household as international travelers are not required to self quarantine. However, self monitoring is required for 14 days. Contact medical help if you develop symptoms (i.e. fever, cough, difficulty breathing)

What should I do if I have a trip planned?

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends avoiding all non-essential travel outside of Canada until further notice.

What if I want to keep my child at home this week?

The Public Health Agency of Canada assures that the risk to the public is still low. Keeping schools open next week is a proactive measure to prepare the school system for the suspension of classes that will occur from March 23 – April 10.

- We understand some families may not feel comfortable sending their children to school, especially if cases where family members are immunocompromised. As always, please contact the school for more information or to report an absence.

What else should I keep in mind? The Chief Public Health office recommends the following:

Validate reactions: acknowledge that your thoughts and feelings are normal reactions to an abnormal event. *Remember you are resilient:* note the positive ways you have managed stressful situations in the past, and draw on these.

Stay connected. Reach out to those who help you in times of stress. These supports will help maintain your positive mental health and wellness.

Reduce stressors. Consider what is essential. Limit time on social media or listening to the news.

Practice self-care. Emphasize sleep, healthy eating, drinking water, exercise, and rest. Keep a routine.

Whether we intend it or not, we are models to our children about how to respond to fear, anxiety and stress.

Let us focus on facts, practical actions to reduce risk, and support for one another.