

School Information, Posted March 12, 2020

At this time, schools, daycares and post-secondary institutions can remain open, but steps should be taken to ensure no more than 250 people are in the same room at any given time.

Alberta public health officials are recommending the following actions as a precaution:

- If a student has travelled outside of Canada, it is recommended that they self-isolate until two weeks have passed since their return. This is recommended even if they are feeling well.
- Parents should call [Health Link 811](#) for additional precautions and follow-up testing if their children have travelled to anywhere outside of Canada and experienced any of the following:
 - contact with someone who was suspected or confirmed to have the novel coronavirus
 - were in a health-care facility
 - have symptoms, such as cough or fever

If a student does not meet the exposure criteria above, they do not need to stay away from school and they will likely not be tested for COVID-19 as they do not meet the testing criteria. Therefore, requesting that the student provide a physician's note is not appropriate. For health-related questions or concerns, please call [Health Link at 811](#).

New public health restrictions

Alberta is asking organizers to cancel any events that have more than 250 attendees. This includes large sporting events, conferences and community events. It does not extend to places of worship, grocery stores, airports or shopping centres.

Any event that has more than 50 attendees and expects to have international participants, or involves critical infrastructure staff, seniors, or other high-risk populations should also be cancelled.

Events that do not meet these criteria can proceed, but risk mitigation must be in place, such as sanitizer stations and distancing between attendees.

At this time, schools and daycares can remain open but steps should be taken to ensure that no more than 250 individuals are in the same room at any given time.

Effective March 12, all Albertans who are currently outside the country should self-isolate on their return for 14 days, independent of the country they were visiting.

Letter to Palliser parents

Dear Palliser Families:

We know that school communities are growing increasingly concerned with the COVID-19 virus. We wanted to provide you with some information regarding the response to the virus. Alberta Health Services (AHS) is leading the response in Alberta. Palliser will continue to follow guidance and direction from AHS in response to the virus.

Alberta Health Services is emphasising action to minimize the spread of the virus. As such, schools have been asked to:

- Keep up to date with official information from AHS.
- Prioritize cleaning and disinfecting high touch areas (e.g. door knobs, desk tops, etc.) as part of the cleaning process.
- Encourage the use of techniques to prevent the spread of the virus such as:
 - Proper hand washing protocols.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with something other than hands (e.g. elbow or tissues).
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth, with unwashed hands.
 - Stay at home if you are feeling ill.
- Review no-sharing protocols (e.g. no sharing of food or water bottles).

We would ask that parents and guardians assist by:

- Keeping children home if they are sick. Report any absences to the school.
- Reinforcing good handwashing technique at home.
- Talk to your children about sneezing or coughing into a tissue, or their elbow. If they do sneeze or cough into their hands, encourage them to wash their hands immediately.
- Encourage children to avoid touching their mouth, face or nose with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick if at all possible.

If your child is sick and has symptoms such as: fever; cough and difficulty breathing; has traveled outside of Canada recently or been exposed to COVID-19; please keep them home and call the Alberta Health Link for guidance by dialing 811.

In some cases, AHS is directing Albertans to self-isolate and may test for COVID-19. Self-isolation and testing are precautionary measures and do not mean an individual is infected. Alberta Health Services will provide direction on self-isolation and testing; schools are not in a position to make these decisions.

Due to privacy laws, neither schools or the school division have the authority to disclose information related to students or staff that may have been impacted by the virus. Alberta Health Services will determine if there is a need to share information with school communities, and if there is a need, they will determine what information is shared.

As a reminder, school staff are not able to answer medical questions or make medical decisions. Please contact the Alberta Health Link by dialing 811 if you have medical questions. Should you wish to access further information about the COVID-19 virus, you can go to the AHS website through the link below.

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

Given this is a rapidly changing situation, the school division will have updated information regarding COVID-19 on the division website. Central Office personnel are working closely with school administration to address concerns and changes in practice as the situation evolves. As always, individual schools will have the most accurate, up to date information pertaining to specifics at the school level.

We are grateful for the hard work of our staff during this time and appreciate the support of parents and school communities.