

Dear Parents/Guardians/Students:

I am writing to update you on the current situation with regards to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation that you are probably hearing about in the media and through social media.

At this time of year many people and families are planning to travel during March break plus many schools are planning school trips outside of Nova Scotia. At this time, decisions regarding whether to travel or not remain the responsibility of families or schools. The COVID-19 situation is evolving rapidly with increasing global spread, so it is important that people have up-to-date information on COVID-19 to inform these decisions. Travel advisories based on COVID-19 can be found at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

Schools and families are encouraged to visit the site to help guide their decision on whether to continue with or cancel travel plans. It is important to know that decisions made by travel companies, airlines and other countries may also affect your travel plans.

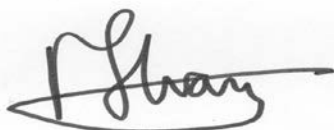
There is also an increasing risk of the spread of COVID-19 to and within Canada. The following steps are important in preventing the spread of common respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, as well as COVID-19

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. If using a tissue, immediately place it in a waste disposal and wash your hands.
- If possible, stay home when ill with fever or cough, if this is not possible, limit close contact with others.
- Limit touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Don't share items that may have saliva on them such as, drinking glasses and water bottles.
- Frequently clean surface like taps, doorknobs and countertops.
- Use of masks by the general public for respiratory illnesses such as influenza and COVID-19 have not been shown to be effective in preventing virus spread and are not recommended for prevention.

Further information on COVID-19 is available on the Nova Scotia government website

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

Sincerely,



Robert Strang MD, MHSc., FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health