

March 12, 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for Parents

At Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools, the safety of our students, families and staff is our top priority. As the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic progresses, all our staff are working hard to meet our responsibility to keep our students safe, while also responding in a supportive, calm and appropriate way to this changing situation.

We continue to look to the experts at Alberta Health Services and Health Canada for new information as it becomes available. We are prepared; there is an emergency plan in place, staff are being informed how to handle outbreaks, and we are practicing hand-washing with students.

We are also committed to informing you directly if your child's school is impacted by COVID-19. Other sources of information, like social media, can be unreliable or not include all relevant facts. If a situation arises that we need to tell you about, we will inform all affected families as quickly as we can.

Look for the latest information and useful links online at: <https://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/>

Current situation:

- Alberta Health has set the current risk level in our province at "low."
- At this time, there are no school closures, and Alberta Health Services is indicating that schools can remain open.
- There are no cases (confirmed or presumptive) of COVID-19 in our schools.
- Following Alberta Health Services' recommendations, we are stopping all large public gatherings where there may be people from different areas and congregating in close proximity for extended periods of time. Some examples of such gatherings include but are not limited to: field trips, tournaments, open houses, and parent-teacher interviews.
- Other events will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

What you can do

To minimize spread of viruses, Alberta Health recommends the following:

- Make sure everyone in your household thoroughly washes their hands with soap and water often.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw it in a garbage bin lined with a plastic bag. Wash your hands immediately after that. If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
- Stay home if you're sick. If your kids are sick, keep them home from school.

- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are used often and shared by everyone in your home.

Contact your primary health provider or Health Link 811 if you have questions or concerns about your health.

Travel outside Canada is no longer recommended at this time. If you travel, you may be asked to self-quarantine upon your return.

If you haven't already done so, please talk to your children about this virus in a factual, age-appropriate way. Let them know that worrying is normal and healthy. Be honest and accurate. Help them feel safe and understand what they can do to prevent the spread of germs.

Here are some additional sources of information you may find useful:

Alberta Health:

<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Health Canada:

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

World Health Organization:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Psychological Coping during a Pandemic (Psychologists' Association of Alberta)

<https://psychologistsassociation.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-March-PAA-Psychological-Health-in-Pandemics.pdf>

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your school principal.