

March 13, 2020

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for Parents, Students, and Staff

Dear Parents, Students, and Staff:

We appreciate your patience as we continue to work through information, updates, and advisories released from Alberta Health Services and Health Canada. At this time, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Chief Medical Officer, emphasized that the best thing that we can do is to continue to be vigilant about good hygiene rather than to close schools. To minimize the spread of viruses, Alberta Health recommends the following:

- Make sure everyone in your household thoroughly washes their hands with soap and water often and for at least 20 seconds.
- 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.

Dr. Hinshaw emphasized that **school closure is not advised** at this time because good hygiene has been proven to be a better measure than closure which does not prevent the spread of the virus in other locations. In addition, we have consulted with numerous school jurisdictions, and we would like to provide the following update on **a new preventative measure to be implemented starting Monday, March 16, 2020: Please bring personal water bottles to schools and plan to fill and refill them at school.** We will be asking that students, parents, and staff avoid drinking from water fountains to reduce the risk of sharing fluids.

To support parents in reporting absences due to either **self-isolation (SI)** when their child is showing possible symptoms of the coronavirus or a **confirmed case of the virus COVID-19 (CV)**, please report using one of the three approaches:

1. Call the Safe Arrival toll free number 1-844-818-9908 to report an absence using the automated phone system. When prompted, choose an absence reason and the **two new attendance codes are added (SI - Self Isolation and CV - COVID 19 confirmed) to the absence reasons.**
2. Enter the absence via the **Safe Arrival mobile App - the attendance codes (SI - Self Isolation and CV - COVID 19 confirmed) have been added to the list of absence reasons.**
3. Call your child's school and report the absence and reason to the School Office.

Sincerely,  
David Keohane, Superintendent of Schools