

Date: March 17, 2020

In Person Classes Suspended

The Minister of Education has written a [letter to parents, guardians and school/school district staff](#) regarding updated direction from the Provincial Health Officer to all schools to immediately suspend in-class instruction until further notice. Please share with your school community.

This letter follows up on a joint announcement from the Premier, Minister of Education and Minister of Finance earlier today regarding COVID-19.

Continuity of Educational Opportunities

A reminder that the Ministry is convening a K-12 working group to support the development of continuity of instruction guidelines. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Eleanor Liddy at Eleanor.Liddy@gov.bc.ca.

Daily Provincial Update

There are currently 103 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in B.C. The Provincial Health Officer has reiterated [updated guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada](#), for Canadians to avoid all non-essential international travel and self-isolate for 14 days following return from international travel (*exemptions are in place for workers who are essential to the movement of goods and people*). Travellers returning to B.C. should call 8-1-1 or their local health care provider immediately if they develop a fever, cough or difficulty breathing.

The BC Ministry of Health has also developed a self-assessment tool to help determine whether you may need further assessment or testing for COVID-19: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>. You can complete this assessment for yourself, or on behalf of someone else, if they are unable to.

Federal Updates

On March 16th, the Prime Minister of Canada [announced](#) the closure of Canadian borders to foreign travellers from all countries except the United States to help limit the spread of COVID-19. The restrictions will come into effect on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, and will not apply to air crews, travelers arriving in Canada to transit to a third country, Canadian permanent residents, diplomats, or immediate family members of Canadian citizens.

Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to board a flight to Canada. To assist asymptomatic Canadians in returning to Canada, the federal government has also established a COVID-19 Emergency Loan Program for Canadians Abroad.

Supports for Schools and School Districts

The Ministry has set up a dedicated email address and phone number [for school/school district administrators](#) regarding COVID-19 related inquiries. If you have any questions or requests for assistance, please email educ.covid@gov.bc.ca or call 236-478-2712.

[For parents and guardians](#), we encourage you to share B.C.'s new dedicated phone service for non-medical information about COVID-19: **1-888-COVID19**. Service representatives are available seven days a week from 7:30AM to 8PM, and information is available in more than 110 languages.

Specific public health questions re COVID-19 should be directed to your local health authority for response.

Useful Links

- [Mar. 16, joint statement from the Minister of Health and the Provincial Health Officer](#)
- [Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control – Information on COVID-19](#)
- [HealthLink BC – Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

Please note that DM Bulletins are intended for school/school district staff and are not intended for direct distribution to parents/guardians. Feel free to extract or adapt relevant excerpts for your own communication purposes.