

November 10, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you know, staff and students are practicing a comprehensive suite of health and safety measures while at school to help protect themselves, each other, their families and the wider community from the risk of COVID-19. This weekend, due to the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 increasing rapidly in the lower mainland, a new [public health order](#) was issued for the Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health regions. The order is aimed at reducing social interactions so that schools and workplaces can remain open.

We felt it was timely to send a reminder of how we can all do our part to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and encourage you to follow the [BC Centre for Disease Control's measures](#) to stay healthy and prevent the spread of COVID-19. These include:

- Please stay at home and keep a safe distance from people in your household when you have COVID, cold or flu-like symptoms. Please refer to the [Daily Health Check](#).
- Socialize only with those in your household. As a result of the November 7 public health order, no social gatherings of any size with anyone other than your immediate household are allowed.
- Connect with people you do not live with by phone or by video call.
- Wear masks in indoor public places.
- Practice good hygiene, including:
 - Regular hand washing/sanitizing
 - Avoiding touching your face
 - Covering coughs and sneezes
 - Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces

Social Interactions at Schools

Our schools have been back in session for almost two months, and our students have adapted extremely well to the new health and safety protocols. Throughout the school day, our staff take great care to ensure students are kept within their learning groups/cohorts, including ensuring that students are not socializing with students from outside their cohort during recess and lunch break or, if they are, ensuring they maintain two metres distance from them. This is done to limit students' interactions with others to help reduce their potential exposure to COVID-19.

We know that school drop-off and pick-up are very busy at schools and it can be challenging for students and their families to maintain two metres distance from others. We also recognize that school drop-off and pick-up provide an opportunity for parents to connect with each other. Following this weekend's public health order, we would like to ask for your support in ensuring that you do not interact with others outside of your household, or allow your child to play with others from outside of their cohort. To help avoid these social interactions, we encourage you to leave the school grounds promptly after dropping off or picking up your child from school.

COVID Exposure Protocols

In September, we shared the protocols followed when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19. ([September 16 letter to families](#), [Fraser Health flowchart](#)). Through its contact tracing process, Fraser Health will reach out directly to families if they think their child has come into close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and will ask them to take specific action, such as go for a COVID test or self-isolate. In addition, Fraser Health will ask the school district to send an early notification letter out to the entire school community. The letter contains the dates of exposure and states: *Receiving this letter does not mean you have been exposed to COVID-19. Case(s) have been isolated, and there is no direct exposure risk at this time.* It advises families that their child should continue to attend school, but also asks them to monitor for any symptoms that may develop.

At schools where there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19, we have received some questions regarding why it takes so long from the date of exposure until families receive the early notification letter. Below is an example to help explain why this process takes time:

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| Day 1 | A student attends school as they are feeling well. |
| Day 2 | The student starts to feel unwell and so stays home from school. |
| Days 3 - 4 | A day or two later, the student has enough symptoms that their family takes them for a COVID test. |
| Days 5 - 7 | The student self-isolates while waiting for their test result (generally 1 - 3 days). |
| Days 6+ | If the student tests positive <u>and</u> Fraser Health believes they were potentially infectious while at school, Fraser Health will contact the student's close contacts (<u>those who could have been exposed to the student's respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing or speaking</u>) and ask them to self-isolate. Fraser Health will contact the school district to ask us to send an early notification letter out to all families at the school. |

If the student tests positive and Fraser Health believes they weren't potentially infectious while at school, we won't hear from Fraser Health. This is why the local community may sometimes hear that a student has tested positive, yet no letter is sent out.

It is important to realize that every situation is unique and the steps taken may be different than outlined above. Fraser Health leads the communication process. You can find information on all current school exposures by visiting the Fraser Health website and looking at the [school exposures page](#). Please note: Fraser Health removes notifications after the 14-day incubation period from date of exposure has passed.

Many thanks for your assistance with minimizing the risk for yourself and those around you. Together, we can flatten the curve.

Sincerely,



Doug Sheppard
Superintendent of Schools