



Good afternoon Fort McMurray Catholic Schools family,

We wanted to reach out to our families as we know there is an increasing number of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) cases being confirmed in Alberta. We understand this can be a time of anxiety for many in our division.

We at Fort McMurray Catholic Schools are following the lead of Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr Deena Hinshaw, Alberta Health Services, and Public Health officials. While the risk is deemed low, Fort McMurray Catholic Schools is implementing measures for the prevention and control of respiratory viruses.

- We are increasing cleaning in recommended areas including high touch areas,
- We are speaking with all students/staff and encouraging more frequent and proper hand washing,
- We are modeling and ensuring proper respiratory etiquette (ex. Sneezing into elbow),
- We are recommending students bring a water bottle to school

We know many of our families may have trips planned for our upcoming Easter Break and some families and staff members may choose to spend the week travelling abroad.

Decisions regarding whether or not to travel remain the responsibility of families. The COVID-19 situation is evolving rapidly with increasing global spread, so it is important that people have up-to-date information to inform these decisions. All Albertans are encouraged to visit www.alberta.ca/COVID19 or www.ahs.ca/covid for guidance around prevention, testing and other useful information.

Travel advisories are issued by the federal government and can be found at [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Travel advice](#). In addition to travel advisories, this site also offers information on the health risks of travel specific to the evolving COVID-19 situation. Families are encouraged to visit this site to help guide their decision on whether to continue with travel or adjust their travel plans. It is also important to know that decisions made by travel companies, airlines and other countries may affect your travel plans.

It is important to understand that COVID-19 is having an impact globally, and that non-essential travel in general is an additional risk that we should all consider.

While the current risk of catching the virus in Alberta remains low, this may change in the coming weeks. It is important that all of us take the necessary steps to minimize risk and to keep others safe. Whether staying in Fort McMurray, or travelling, the following steps are important in preventing the spread of common respiratory illnesses (such as influenza) as well as COVID-19:



- use good hygiene practices, such as frequent handwashing
- cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Dispose of tissues immediately and wash your hands
- avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill
- don't share items that may have saliva on them such as drinking glasses and water bottles
- clean high touch surfaces such as taps, door knobs and countertops frequently

All travellers are advised to monitor their health for flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, and difficulty breathing) for 14 days from the date of their return from travel. Stay home if you're feeling sick/unwell and follow the advice of your health care provider if you have been asked to self-monitor.

We have compiled the latest information regarding COVID-19 on our website:

<https://fmcschools.ca/covid-19-information/>

Please contact 8-1-1 (Alberta Health Link) or your health care provider for questions about your personal health situation.

Please note: School divisions do not have the authority to make public health decisions. If steps are taken in relation to a public health concern, it is at the direction of the Alberta Health Services and local health authorities. Fort McMurray Catholic Schools is in regular communication with Alberta Education, Alberta Health Services, and school divisions across the province.

Thank you for your support as we work to help keep our communities healthy and safe. The safety and security of our students and staff is always our first priority in Fort McMurray Catholic Schools.

George McGuigan

Superintendent of Schools