



# Catholic Independent Schools of Vancouver Archdiocese

*Office of the Superintendent*

March 9, 2020

Dear students, parents and staff,

The Superintendent's Office, together with local school administrators, continues to actively monitor the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its development locally and throughout the world. The health and safety of our students, staff and community are of paramount concern. We continue to work in conjunction with the provincial Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and the Federation of Independent Schools Association of BC to provide frequent updates of information that are regularly distributed to school staff and families. At this time, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has assessed the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as low for Canada. Public health risk is continually reassessed as new information becomes available.<sup>1</sup>

In order to mitigate the risk of infection, our CISVA schools are working to ensure that our school facilities are properly and thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. Students and school staff are encouraged and reminded to help decrease their risk of infection by practicing the following proper respiratory and hand hygiene etiquette as outlined by the BC Ministry of Health:

- frequently washing hands with soap and water (or sanitizer, if soap and water is not readily available),
- avoid touching one's face,
- covering one's mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of the elbow when sneezing or coughing,
- not sharing food or drinks, and,
- staying home when feeling ill.<sup>2</sup>

If you are travelling, please note that your school may strongly recommend a period of self-quarantine if you are visiting affected areas<sup>3</sup>. According to the BC Ministry of Health, "self-quarantine" involves limiting contact with others for 14 days by staying home, avoiding having visitors to your home and avoiding those with chronic conditions, compromised immune systems and older adults. During this period, you are asked to self-monitor for fever, cough or difficulty breathing. Should you or anyone

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html#a3>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-covid-19>

<sup>3</sup> <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>

in your household develop these symptoms, please call 811 or speak to your health care provider immediately. Please also inform your school principal as soon as possible.

It is important for the safety of all our students and school staff that families keep their children home if there is any risk of infection. As with any illness or absence from school, our principals and teachers will work with families to ensure that student learning can continue. CISVA schools remain open unless we are advised to close by the health or education authorities, and/or if the safety of students and staff is compromised. Options are currently being investigated to allow learning to continue in these circumstances.

Local school administrators, in consultation with the Superintendent, have already cancelled school trips to high risk areas. Decisions regarding trips scheduled over the next few months will be made in continued consultation with the Government of Canada's Travel Advice and Advisories branch, local school administrators and the Superintendent.

As COVID-19 continues to develop over the next weeks and months, I wish to reassure you that the health and wellness of our students, staff and community remains our top priority. Our office will continue to provide timely information and additional resources as they become available. Please visit our website regularly for updated information<sup>4</sup>. I am grateful for your prayers, patience and understanding as we navigate this challenging time together.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke that tapers to the right.

Deacon Henk Luyten  
Superintendent

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<sup>4</sup> <https://cisva.bc.ca/coronavirus/>