



# Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education

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Dear MHCBE Families:

With the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) now being classified as a pandemic, I am sure that there are many questions that have arisen. The jurisdiction is taking a number of steps to mitigate the spread of the virus. Areas of pandemic preparedness include:

1. School Cleaning:
  - a. Enhanced cleaning/disinfecting practice have been added. This includes a special focus on high contact touch points such as doorknobs, sinks, toilets, handles and keyboards etc.
  - b. We are ensuring that we have additional supplies on hand such as soap, hand sanitizers etc.
2. Hand washing and respiratory etiquette:
  - a. We are reminding students and staff to wash hands with soap and water often.
  - b. Avoid touching their face with unwashed hands.
  - c. Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose immediately. Throw the tissue into the garbage immediately and wash hands with soap and water.
  - d. If students or staff are not feeling well, they should take the precaution of staying home.

## **When Students Who Have Travelled Should Remain at Home**

As noted in Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health's March 3, 2020, Memo to Parents, Alberta public health officials recommend the following precautionary measures:

- If a student has visited a Grand Princess Cruise, Iran or China's Hubei province in the last 14 days, it is recommended they self-isolate until 2 weeks have passed since that visit. This is recommended even if they are feeling well;
- Families should call **Health Link 811** for additional precautions and follow-up testing if they or their children have travelled to anywhere outside of Canada and experienced any of the following:
  - contact with someone who was suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19
  - were in a health-care facility
  - have symptoms, such as cough or fever
- If a student does not meet the exposure criteria above, they do not need to stay away from school and will not likely be tested for COVID-19.

## Supporting and Talking to Children

COVID-19 can make children anxious. Teachers have been asked to address student concerns and explain how students may reduce anxiety by having some control in dealing with COVID-19 (i.e. understanding COVID-19, hand washing, etc.) The following link provides staff and families with information regarding discussing Coronavirus with students, [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#). We encourage families to talk about the situation and educate themselves on what the virus is and how to help prevent it from spreading.

## Travelling Advice

Families who are travelling overseas for personal travel are encouraged to regularly monitor [Government of Canada Travel Advisories](#). The current areas where health travel notices have been issued are: China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Italy, Singapore, South Korea, and Spain. Impacted areas may change and expand as the situation evolves. Before booking or embarking on travel outside the province of Alberta, all members of the MHCBE community are strongly encouraged to evaluate all associated risks, which may include the risk of becoming ill, falling under the restrictions of a foreign government, or forfeiting travelers cancellation or medical coverage.

All members of the community returning from a jurisdiction with an [active travel health notice](#) from the Government of Canada, whether the travel was business or personal travel, are expected to take reasonable steps to prevent exposing our community to risk. This includes self-monitoring and, if returning from a level 3 or level 4 locations such as China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Italy, Singapore, South Korea, and Spain, self-isolating for 14 days.

Finally, while the current risk is low, it is important that we are prepared in case that changes. We will work diligently to keep you as up-to-date as possible. We will continue to update guidance and preparedness recommendations as the situation and knowledge evolves. Please refer to our division website at [www.mhcbe.ab.ca/our-district/news/post/covid-19](http://www.mhcbe.ab.ca/our-district/news/post/covid-19) for timely, updated information.

Stay blessed!



Dwayne Zarichny  
Superintendent of Schools  
Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education

# ABOUT CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

## WHAT IT IS

**COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus.**

Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, similar to the common cold.

## HOW IT IS SPREAD

Coronaviruses are most commonly SPREAD from an infected person through:

- ▶ respiratory droplets when you cough or sneeze
- ▶ close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- ▶ touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands

These viruses are not known to spread through ventilation systems or through water.

## IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS

If you have SYMPTOMS of COVID-19 — fever, cough, or difficulty breathing:

- ▶ stay home to avoid spreading it to others
  - if you live with others, stay in a separate room or keep a 2-metre distance
- ▶ call ahead before you visit a health care professional or call your local public health authority
  - tell them your symptoms and follow their instructions
- ▶ if you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and tell them your symptoms.

## SYMPTOMS

Symptoms may be very mild or more serious. They may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus.



FEVER



COUGH



DIFFICULTY BREATHING

## PREVENTION

The best way to prevent the spread of infections is to:



- ▶ wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds



- ▶ avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands



- ▶ avoid close contact with people who are sick



- ▶ when coughing or sneezing:
  - cover your mouth and nose with your arm or tissues to reduce the spread of germs



- immediately dispose of any tissues you have used into the garbage as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards



- ▶ clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as toys, electronic devices and doorknobs.



- ▶ stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CORONAVIRUS:

☎ 1-833-784-4397

@ [canada.ca/coronavirus](https://canada.ca/coronavirus)

✉ [phac.info.aspc@canada.ca](mailto:phac.info.aspc@canada.ca)



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