

January 30, 2020

**District
Administration Office**

P.O. Box 430
620 – 4th Street
Invermere, B.C.
Canada
V0A 1K0
Telephone
(250) 342-9243
Facsimile
(250) 342-6966



Rocky Mountain
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6

Golden Zone Office

P.O. Box 1110
Golden, B.C.
Canada
V0A 1H0
Telephone
(250) 344-5068
Facsimile
(250) 342-6966

Kimberley Zone Office

P.O. Box 70
Kimberley, B.C.
Canada
V1A 2Y5
Telephone
(250) 427-2245
Facsimile

Dear SD6 Parents/Guardians and Staff :

The BC Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, announced on January 28 that the first case of novel coronavirus has been confirmed in BC. Since that time we have received some information updates and I am forwarding those details to you as I know you may have questions.

The risk of spread of this virus within B.C. remains low at this time and all necessary precautions are being taken to prevent the spread of infection. B.C. has a strong ongoing monitoring system in place through its local health authorities and at this point, there are no reasons for parents, guardians or school staff to be concerned about student health while at school. The Ministry of Education will continue to work with the Ministry of Health and Provincial Health Officer to monitor the situation and communicate with the education sector if there are developments to ensure student and staff safety.

We understand that there is incorrect information about coronavirus starting to circulate on social media. We encourage everyone to refer to official sources such as the BC Centre for Disease Control for the latest information and updates at <http://www.bccdc.ca/>. Please note that in order to reduce the risk of exposure to novel coronavirus, employ the same measures that are taken in response to colds and flu:

- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water (it is the single most effective way of reducing infection spread).
- Practice other good hygiene habits: do not touch your face/eyes/mouth with your hands, and cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough (ideally with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched workspace surfaces.
- Maintain good general health (eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, exercise in moderation).
- Stay home if you are sick.
- A new toll-free phone number (1-833-784-4397) has been established to answer questions from Canadians about the 2019 novel coronavirus. Service is available from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. until January 29 and from 7 a.m. to midnight starting January 30 (Eastern Standard Time).

Advice for anyone considering travel:

- Those considering travel to and from China are encouraged to consult the Travel Health Notice (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories/pneumonia-china>) for China on travel.gc.ca regularly, as recommendations may change over the course of your travel as new information becomes available.
- No matter where you plan to travel, the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that they consult travel.gc.ca, which is the Government of Canada's official source of destination-specific travel information. It provides important advice to help travelers make informed decisions and travel safely while abroad.
- Travellers should always tell their health care providers about their travel history if they become ill after returning to Canada.

There are questions about the wearing of masks. The Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, advises that the wearing of masks is appropriate in certain situations. If you are sick, it can help prevent transmission to others, which is why people who have a cough or respiratory symptoms in an emergency department at a hospital are asked to wear masks. It is also important for health care workers who are getting very close to people while providing care. She also advises that it is not clear how effective it is to wear a mask in the community when you are not sick yourself, as this may give you a false sense of security. The very most important health practice is to wash your hands regularly.

Anyone who is concerned about their personal health situation should contact their primary-care provider, local public health office or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.

Sincerely,



Paul Carriere
Superintendent of Schools