



Coronavirus COVID – 19

March 11, 2020

Dear ETSB Students, Staff, and Families,

Over the past week, there has been a significant increase in information about the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The Eastern Townships School Board is monitoring this situation and continues to work with the Ministry of Education, Santé Québec, Public Health Canada, and other governmental agencies.

Fortunately, there are currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our region, making the immediate health risk low in our community. At present, school closures are not recommended for the prevention of COVID-19.

At the ETSB, we are putting in place a number of proactive measures to protect student and staff well-being. This is an evolving situation, and timely and accurate information is critical.

To avoid spreading germs – The best precautions to protect yourself and the people around you from this and other viruses, are to wash your hands often, and cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your arm when you cough or sneeze. **Should you experience any symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing), you should immediately contact Info-Santé 811.**

Please visit the [ETSB website](#) for more information and resources.

This information by no means replaces the advice of a health professional. If you have questions regarding your health, contact **Info-Santé 811** or see a health professional.

School Cleaning – The ETSB has been proactive in ordering additional supplies, anticipating the need for hand sanitizer, and increased use of hand soap and paper towels in support of handwashing. As part of our regular routine, cleaning practices are being implemented to reduce the risk of transmission.

Supporting and Talking to Children – Concern over this new virus can make children and families anxious. Children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events and need factual, age appropriate information. Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety. The following link is a great resource to help you speak with your children: <https://www.Québec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/>.

Traveling advice – Parents and staff who are traveling overseas for personal travel are encouraged to regularly monitor Government of Canada Travel Advisories at: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories> Please note impacted areas may change and expand as the situation continues to evolve. Please follow Québec’s Public Health advice about who should self-isolate and for how long upon returning to Canada. Continue to monitor Québec’s Public Health site at: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/finding-a-resource/info-sante-811/>

At this time the ETSB has not prohibited out of country trips (that does not mean some could require altering trip itineraries and/or quarantines when travelers return to Canada). We are relying on Health Canada, *Santé et Services sociaux* and the other agencies involved, to see what restrictions and recommendations are put in place. We will follow the government agency guidelines, with our first priority being the safety of our students and staff. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has categorized the risk of international travel into four levels. PHAC recommends that citizens avoid non-essential travel to high-risk countries or areas (level 3) and avoid travel to extreme-risk countries (level 4).

We believe it will take a collective effort to minimize the spread of COVID-19. The safety and security of our staff and students continues to be our first priority. We remain committed to monitoring this situation and keeping you informed.

Sincerely,

Michel Soucy



Interim Director General