March 10, 2020

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) continues to take direction on public health matters, including the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), from our regional, provincial and federal public health authorities:

- Region of Peel Public Health
- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health
- Ontario Ministry of Health
- Health Canada

We continue to post and relay information we receive from these health authorities to our school communities and also provide direct links to them on our Coronavirus Information webpage to ensure that you are kept apprised of any developments that impact our schools and operations. As we approach March Break, we are providing you with the most recent information and guidance on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Our regional public health authorities advise us that individuals with confirmed cases of COVID-19 contracted the illness outside of Peel Region and Dufferin County, that there is no community spread of COVID-19 at this time, and that the risk of acquiring the illness from a school setting remains low. As such, none of the public health authorities locally, provincially, or anywhere in Canada are currently recommending the closure of schools to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

With March Break approaching for parents/guardians and families, many are concerned around the risks associated with travel and their return to Canada. In this regard, parents/guardians are advised to check the Government of Canada Travel website for up-to-date information on areas impacted by COVID-19. It is recommended that all individuals avoid non-essential travel to impacted areas. There are several active travel health notices for COVID-19. Each country or area may have different levels of risk. These risk levels may change as the COVID-19 event evolves internationally. Before you leave, check the following destinations that have travel health notices for COVID-19: China, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Italy, Singapore and South Korea.

On Monday, March 9, the Federal Government issued updated direction to Canadians travelling internationally. The high-level direction is noted below, but travellers are encouraged to visit the Government of Canada Travel website for full details:

- avoid all cruise ship travel;
- all returning international travellers should self-monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, and difficulty breathing) for 14 days from the date of return to Canada, and should immediately contact their local public health unit if they fall ill or exhibit symptoms during that period;
- all travellers from Hubei Province in China or Iran should self-isolate for 14 days from the time they began their trip back to Canada.
Peel Public Health’s website as well as that of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is up to date with prevention and protection information for the public.

We reiterate the advice of our public health authorities that the best way to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, is to:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing; if no tissue is available, sneeze or cough into the sleeve or arm;
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces regularly;
- Stay home if ill until your symptoms resolve.

To support a healthy environment in schools, DPCDSB has enacted enhanced cleaning procedures including:

- Daily cleaning and disinfecting of all hard surfaces (hand contact areas), including door handles, drinking fountains, sinks, faucets, telephones, handrails, door push plates, classroom desks, counter tops, tables, cafeteria tables, urinals, toilets, toilet seats, washroom fixtures;
- Daily cleaning and disinfecting of all washrooms;
- Frequent checking and ensuring that paper towels are stocked, and soap dispensers and hand sanitizer dispensers are filled;
- Frequent checking of hand dryers;
- Regular washroom checks throughout the school day, including before and after recesses;
- Daily cleaning of all floors.

Thank you for your attention to this important information. We will continue to keep you updated as new information becomes available.

Communications & Community Relations
Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board