

March 9, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you are aware, the recent coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has continued to impact countries around the world. Given the evolving nature of this health issue, we are sending parents and staff a current update, including how it may impact the many families who are looking forward to travelling this Spring Break. Understandably, there is a good deal of concern with respect to international travel, including international field trips and personal vacations. Public health officials are advising the public to reference [Government of Canada travel health notices](#) to inform decision making regarding their travel plans. Situations can change quickly, so checking the site regularly is strongly advised.

The public has been made aware there is an updated warning to avoid non-essential travel to Iran, Northern Italy and some areas of South Korea. In addition, some countries have enacted measures which restrict some movement and public gatherings. We are currently aware of school closures in Japan and Italy, as well as restrictions on public gatherings in France.

After careful consideration we have decided to cancel Saanich School District international field trips planned for Japan and Europe due to the possible elevated risk for students and staff travelling in these regions.

We are also asking parents and staff who are travelling overseas for personal travel to please consider that there may be a need for these travellers to be quarantined upon their return to Canada. Island Health is currently recommending that travelers returning from Iran, China and Italy self-quarantine for 14 days. Please note that these areas may change and expand as the situation evolves. We are working closely and take direction from our provincial health experts at the BC Ministry of Health and Island Health.

For more information on COVID-19, including ways to reduce your risk of infection, please refer to the following resources:

- Novel Coronavirus Q&A from HealthLinkBC: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-covid-19>
- BC Centre for Disease Control: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))
- Government of Canada Travel Health Notices: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notices>
- Saanich School District website updates: <https://www.sd63.bc.ca/news/2020-01/coronavirus-covid-19-provincial-information-update>

We thank you for your understanding during this difficult time. If you have any questions, please contact your school administration directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Eberwein", is written over a horizontal line.

Dave Eberwein
Superintendent of Schools

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