

March 14, 2020

To all Horizon School Division Parents/Guardians

On March 14, 2020, superintendents took part in a meeting with the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMO) and other senior officials of Alberta Education. The medical officer answered school division questions and explained why Alberta is keeping schools open at this time. She shared that short-term (e.g. two week) school closures would not stop the spread of the virus but would hurt schools ability to provide support and stability for students and parents, especially given that 74% of Albertans do not have a stay at home parent. A better solution, at this time, is to stay home if you are sick and to take other steps to slow the spread of the virus such as hand washing, proper sneezing and coughing, better school cleaning, and not sharing personal items.

Two of the guidelines that affect parents are good hand washing and staying home if you are sick.

Students/children and adults should be washing their hands (see instructions).

- before leaving home and on arrival at school
- after using the toilet
- after breaks and sporting activities
- before food preparation
- before eating any food, including snacks
- after contact with saliva or nasal secretions
- before using shared materials such as arts and craft supplies
- before leaving school and on arrival at home

If your child(ren) are displaying respiratory illness (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, muscle aches) **they should stay home from school**. Teachers will be asked to watch their classrooms, and if any student is sick, we will be following specific steps. The same steps will be followed if a staff member begins to get sick. Steps include:

- If a student, child or staff is sick while at school, they will be removed from the classroom, and supervised until they can go home.
- Schools will call parents/guardians if their child gets sick while at school, and parents must immediately pick up their child as sick child(ren) should not ride the bus.
- Sick students/children or staff with respiratory symptoms should be kept home for 14 days after the start of the symptoms.

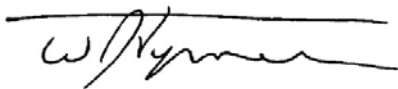
Since younger children may not always tell adults when they are sick, they should be closely watched by adults.

I thank you for your ongoing commitment to the safety and well-being of our students and encourage you to reassure your children about their personal safety and health. Tell your children that it is okay and tell them they are safe and there are things they can do to stay healthy:

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Cough and sneeze into arm or tissue.
- Stay home when sick
- Keep hands away from face and mouth.
- Stay healthy by eating healthy foods, keeping physically active, getting enough sleep.

We will be providing further details as information becomes available.

Respectfully,



Wilco Tymensen
Superintendent of Schools

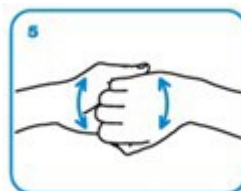
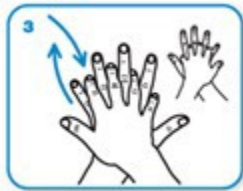
How to Hand Wash

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If you have any questions or comments regarding this information please contact the Infection Prevention & Control Hand Hygiene Program at: Hand.Hygiene@ahs.ca



- Roll up long sleeves and push up any wrist accessories
- Wet hands with warm water
- Apply enough soap to cover surfaces of the hands



- Vigorously rub soap over palms, backs of hands and wrists
- Include space between fingers, fingertips and thumbs
- Procedure should take 15 to 30 seconds



- Rinse under warm, running water
- Pat hands dry with disposable towel
- Turn tap off with the disposable towel

Periodically apply AHS-provided hand lotion for skin integrity.

Adapted with permission from The World Health Organization

Original date: May 2017
Revised date: June 2019