

Dear Partners,

I am writing to provide you with an update on the COVID-19 situation here in New Brunswick. Our province, much like the rest of the world, is dealing with the rising number of Omicron variant cases.

In response to this, New Brunswick has implemented a number of measures which are having a direct impact on the lives of New Brunswickers and in turn on the lives of our students.

With this in mind, we felt that it was important to provide all relevant information to you, to students and to their natural families so they are aware of the situation.

Please be advised that, should any of your students who are scheduled to arrive for second semester decide to delay their New Brunswick experience until September 2022, we can make that accommodation.

THE COVID-19 SITUATION

As I mentioned above, the COVID-19 situation in New Brunswick has changed quite significantly over the course of the last number of weeks and the province has announced new COVID-19 testing and isolation requirements, which can be found at the link below.

https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2021.12.0944.html

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SCHOOL AND ACTIVITIES

Home Learning

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) has announced that students will not be returning to public schools until at least January 24, 2022, when the situation will be reassessed. During that time, at home virtual learning will take place.

EECD has also announced that students and parents can expect that throughout the winter months schools and school districts may move in and out of the COVID-19 alert levels (which may include periods of home learning). See link below for more details.

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/9-12-winter-plan.pdf>

Extracurricular and Intramural Sports and Activities

Currently, while students are learning from home, organized sporting activities will be limited to practices and skills/drills that involve one team at a time, for children who are 12 years of age and older.

When schools and school districts move in and out of the COVID-19 alert levels referenced above, students and parents can expect interruptions in the student's ability to participate in extracurricular and intramural sports and activities at school.

New Brunswick International Student Program (NBISP) Activities

As COVID-19 restrictions change and become more stringent, the NBISP team is working hard to provide activities to our students that remain consistent with the Public Health rules and regulations. This has become increasingly more challenging, particularly since New Brunswick has moved into Level 2 of its Winter Plan (see below for more details).

At this time, we are not able to guarantee that our team will be able to do monthly activities with our students and our ability to do activities may vary in each region of our province based on the restrictions that are in place at any given time.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STUDENTS AND HOMESTAY FAMILIES

New Brunswick Winter Plan – Level 2

As of December 28th, 2022, the province moved into level 2 of its Winter Plan which further restricts the mobility of New Brunswickers and their ability to gather.

Currently, all New Brunswickers must adhere to the following guidelines:

- All households in New Brunswick must limit their contacts to a maximum of 10 consistent contacts (your “Steady 10”), which must be agreed upon by the household.
- Indoor and outdoor informal gatherings are limited to a household plus their Steady 10.
- Restaurants, retail stores, malls, businesses, gyms, salons and spas, and entertainment centres are able to operate at 50% capacity.

Please be advised that New Brunswick’s Winter Plan provides for the possibility that the “Steady 10” requirement could increase to allow households to have a “Steady 20” and it might also decrease to single-household bubbles over the course of the coming months.

See link below for more information on New Brunswick’s Winter Plan

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19/alert-system.html>

AVAILABILITY OF COVID-19 BOOSTERS FOR OUR STUDENTS

COVID-19 Boosters

New Brunswick is currently providing booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to persons over the age of 50 years. At this point, we do not have any indication from Public Health when we can expect booster doses to be available for people under the age of 18.

We do, however, believe that all NBISP students will be eligible to receive their booster doses of a COVID-19 vaccine while in New Brunswick as soon as their age grouping becomes eligible.

AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL TREATMENT IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Hospitals in New Brunswick

Effective on December 30, 2021, all hospitals in New Brunswick were moved to the red alert level. In the red alert level all surgeries, procedures and hospital appointments have been postponed. As a result, it is very challenging for anyone to see a health care provider in New Brunswick, at this time, unless it is an emergency.

Students do, however, still have access to their student insurance plan, through Blue Cross, that will allow them to consult a health care provider virtually.