

March 18, 2020

To our valued international students and your families,

We wanted to reach out to you in the midst of this global health crisis to say this to you: where we can, we as a district are here to support you still.

We are all currently facing a situation well beyond our control, with the outbreak of COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). We have been monitoring the evolving situation closely, working alongside and taking direction locally from the health experts who are leading the way – Fraser Health, the BC Centre for Disease Control, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer. And we are following closely the developments and changes that have come at a Federal level.

We know the changes this week in particular have likely affected you in some way – with some students travelling now and unable to return to Canada, others here and facing tough decisions as international borders and flights are being locked down.

For as long as you remain a student in our schools, we're committed to doing everything we can to ensure your safety and well-being. We have been working with our homestay families, and through overseas agents, to make sure the support structures you have here remain solidly in place.

The COVID-19 outbreak efforts are being organized across all levels of Canadian government – from the significant restrictions at our borders, to the municipality of New Westminister closing all recreation facilities. The recommendations and preventative efforts that continue to be put in place have a singular goal: flatten the curve and reduce the pace of spread that has overwhelmed many other countries ... an effort that will take a few weeks before we can measure its effectiveness.

Again, at a school district level, we are working collaboratively to be partners in taking proactive measures. That includes the Province of British Columbia yesterday announcing that there will be an indefinite suspension of all in-class instruction. We don't fully know what that means yet as the situation is fast-evolving. What we do know is:

- Districts have been tasked with the job of submitting plans to the Ministry about how to provide students with some continuity of learning.
- Every student will receive final marks
- All students on track to graduate this year will graduate
- The district will go one step farther and ensure that a final report card is prepared and validated at the embassy or consulate where required.

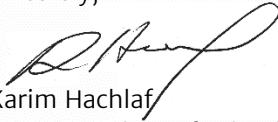
As we know more, we will be reaching out to you.

We also want to be clear: if you'd like to make arrangements for your child to return home, we leave that decision and planning to you. That is your right and we, with full hearts, support whatever decision you make when it comes to what is best for your family.

But, while you or your children remain in our schools, we want you to know we're here for you.

And, we know you may still have questions or concerns. Please reach out to the International Education team whenever issues come up. We'll do our best to provide the answers we can. We want to make sure the information you're receiving is accurate and appropriate to what's happening locally, now. We will also continue to communicate as the situation changes. And, we'll continue to post updates and links to other sources you may find helpful on our website at: newwestschools.ca/coronavirus/

Sincerely,



Karim Hachlaf
Superintendent of Schools / CEO

