

VICTORIA



UPLANDS CAMPUS

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3461 Henderson Road, Victoria, B.C. V8P 5A8

March 19, 2020

Dear partners in education;

I am emailing you today to provide an important update on COVID-19 in British Columbia (BC) and the Greater Victoria region. I know that many of you do not have access to the latest information for BC.

Please read below carefully and share with parents. **This information should help parents make a prudent decision regarding their children returning home to be with family while flights out of Canada are still available. We believe that if possible, all students should be with their families at this time. We also recognize the complexities of international travel at this time and that some students may have difficulty and restrictions upon returning home. Students who cannot get back home due to closed borders or safety issues, please contact your Regional Manager to discuss. Please send flight itineraries to cycarlson@sd61.bc.ca as they become available.**

March 18-19 updates in British Columbia

- On March 17, 2020 the British Columbia government has suspended classroom instruction indefinitely in response to the increasing outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in our province.
- On March 18, 2020 a *State of Emergency* was declared in British Columbia in response to the continued increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- All non-essential gathering places (Restaurants, Coffee Shops, Malls, Museums, clothing stores, etc.) are shut down. Public transit is curtailed. All people who are able, are being asked to stay home. Those that have to leave their homes are being asked to practice social distancing (staying 2 meters away from others) etc.
- As of March 19, 2020 British Columbia has 271 cases of COVID-19. On Saturday March 14, 2020 the number of cases was 73 cases of COVID-19 (271% increase in five days).
- Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry has indicated that the number of COVID-19 cases will increase as the number of COVID-19 tests completed has increased substantially.
- We are in a challenging situation in BC at this time and it is expected the number of cases will continue to increase.
- It is our understanding Air Canada will have flights available to major international hubs until the end of March.
- It is our understanding that many international students that are here in Victoria are not following the principles of social distancing and other measures put in place by our

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Provincial Health Officer. This is extremely problematic. We will continue educating students about social distancing, but we need your help to keep our community safe. Our regional managers will be also contacting students directly to discuss.

Other information:

If you are not able to communicate with families due to the volume of messages let us know and, we will reach out directly to natural parents.

Please watch our daily update at 3pm BC time with Provincial Health Office Dr. Bonnie Henry for a factual account of the current situation <https://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=104070>

Also, please refer to the provincial health update from March 18, 2020

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020HLTH0091-000518>

Many of you are asking our advice as to whether or not students should be going back to their home countries now. Our answer, regrettably, is yes. Let's work together to come create conditions to support our students, staff, and communities through this difficult time.

Regional Managers Contact info:

- Asia: Reid Litster at rlitster@sd61.bc.ca
- China: Mary Shi at zshi@sd61.bc.ca
- Europe: Rob Tucker at rtucker@sd61.bc.ca
- Latin America: Pilar Divoky at pdivoky@sd61.bc.ca
- Flight Itineraries: Cythera Carlson at cycarlson@sd61.bc.ca

Sincerely,

Jeff Davis, PhD

Director

International Education

Greater Victoria School District No. 61

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