



Office of the Regional Executive Director of Education

February 28, 2020

Dear Families,

Subject: School and Student Travel

We recognize that many schools, students and families are planning travel trips over the March Break holiday. We appreciate that many of you have questions related to travel and the novel coronavirus COVID-19. At Halifax Regional Centre for Education, we have been in close contact with public health officials through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Robert Strang, advises families and schools to make individual decisions about travel based on up-to-date information about COVID-19. In the attached letter, Dr. Strang provides links to valuable online resources to help guide your decision-making, including:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>
- <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

We appreciate that information about COVID-19 is evolving. Our commitment is to listen to public health officials and use their advice to guide our decision-making regarding school trips. We recognize that international travel provides a valuable educational experience for students. However, if we are advised that school trips should be cancelled, we will take immediate steps to meet that outcome.

Dr. Strang's letter also provides important prevention tips for all Nova Scotians related to staying healthy during the cold and flu season. As he writes, these steps are important in preventing the spread of common respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, as well as COVID-19.

These steps include the following:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer
- cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue (throw the tissue away)
- limit contact with others when you're sick
- limit touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- don't share items that may have saliva on them like utensils and bottles/glasses
- clean surfaces like taps, doorknobs, and countertops often

Our schools are also focused on regular cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, handrails and desktops.

We appreciate that this situation is evolving. Our commitment is to keep you informed throughout the school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elwin LeRoux". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Elwin LeRoux
Regional Executive Director of Education