



Saint Charles Catholic School

March 13, 2020

St. Charles Community:

Manitoba has joined the ranks of other jurisdictions with the identification of our first COVID-19 cases. The information and circumstances surrounding the pandemic are changing constantly and rapidly. The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to assess the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as low in Canada, with the risk to public health reassessed as new information becomes available.

Our school is actively monitoring the situation and will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available. The Manitoba Catholic Schools Office is in communication with Manitoba Education and will assist us in ensuring we are in alignment with provincial and national policy as it evolves. Manitoba Catholic Schools are committed to working closely with the Government of Manitoba; especially Manitoba Education and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority during a pandemic and will rely on their expertise.

Below is some information about some of the measures we have put in place to strengthen our school's pandemic preparedness procedures:

- The Manitoba Catholic Schools office has issued a policy directive: *Pandemic Planning and Response*
- We have created a Pandemic Planning Committee, a team which will meet as needed to discuss developments and implications for the school community, its students and staff.
- School teachers and staff are reviewing good hygiene with all students - proper hand-washing and sneeze/cough procedures.
- We have increased the routine disinfecting of high contact surfaces.
- We have some signage in place to alert everyone to proper cough/sneeze protocol, as well as proper handwashing, and will be adding more such reminder posters.
- A number of extra-curricular activities have been cancelled or postponed to reduce the gathering of large numbers of people (ie) the Basketball Tournament

Manitoba Health is recommending that all people with symptoms of a respiratory illness, even if mild, should stay home until all symptoms are gone. Symptoms range from mild (fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat) to severe (shortness of breath and breathing difficulties). Older people and those living with chronic health conditions appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill. If you have questions, please contact your healthcare provider, call Health Links 204-788-8200, or visit the Manitoba Health website at www.gov.mb.ca/health

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, COVID-19 can spread through close contact with an infected person who is coughing or sneezing as well as by objects contaminated with the virus. Recommended prevention measures for common viruses are also effective for COVID-19. Prevention measures include:

- Wash your hands regularly with warm water and soap for at least 15 seconds.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, or cough and sneeze into the inside of your elbow/sleeve
- Avoid close contact (within two meters/ six feet) with anyone showing symptoms of a respiratory illness such as coughing or sneezing

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as germs and viruses can transfer from the hands into the body in this way.
- Stay home when you are sick, and continue to stay at home until all symptoms are gone.

Please discuss and reinforce these prevention measures with your child/ren. *It is important to speak with your child/ren in a manner which describes the pandemic concern and these prevention measures in an age-appropriate way which does not create fear or panic.*

If you have travel plans, please consider that health care services may be limited in some areas and travel restrictions or quarantines may be put into place with little notice. Public Health officials strongly recommend reviewing the current Government of Canada travel advisories, see: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html

You may already be aware that all publically funded schools in Ontario will be closed as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic for an additional two weeks after their usual spring break, which begins next week. Schools in Manitoba are **not** set to be closed as of now. Such a closure in Manitoba would only be enacted if directed by the Minister of Education in collaboration with Manitoba Health. St. Charles School Parents would be advised by email should our school or all schools be directed to close. Additional updates would be sent by email as new official information becomes available.

For the latest information from trusted sources on how to protect yourself, the symptoms to watch for, and current status of the concern in Canada and the world, please refer to the following sites:

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
<http://www.wrha.mb.ca/healthinfo/healthlinks/>

The Manitoba Government's Coronavirus website
[Manitoba Government's Coronavirus website](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

World Health Organization
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

This is the link to subscribe to news releases from the Manitoba Government
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/newsinfo/subscribe.html>

Thank you for your cooperation. Please watch your email inbox for additional information from the School Administration as the pandemic situation continues to evolve.

Sincerely,



Tammy Narzynski, Principal
St. Charles Catholic School
331 St. Charles St Winnipeg MB R3K 1T6
204-837-1520