UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Martha Rogers
Director of Education & Secretary-Treasurer
Board Office: 500 Victoria Road N. Guelph, ON N1E 6K2
Email: martha.rogers@ugdsb.on.ca
Tel: 519-822-4420 ext. 720 or **Toll Free:** 1-800-321-4025

March 5, 2020

To all UGDSB staff,

The health and safety of all students, staff and school communities is our top priority. In partnership with public health officials, the Upper Grand District School Board is closely monitoring the current situation with regards to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).
The board is taking its direction on COVID-19 from the local health unit and provincial and federal health authorities. It's important to note that this situation is evolving and information may change from one day to the next. We are monitoring the situation on a daily basis and are staying in close communication with the local health unit. If parents, students and members of the public have questions about COVID-19, they are asked to contact Public Health through its dedicated website or dedicated call centre: https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/your-health/novel-coronavirus-covid-19

At this time, Canadian health authorities state that the risk to Canadians remains low. However, the board has begun taking steps to prepare for the possible spread of COVID-19 into our region.

The board has a Pandemic Plan, which aligns with World Health Organization protocol and lays out actions to take for each phase of a pandemic. Since reports of the novel coronavirus began emerging to date, the board has been in the Preparedness Phase of our Pandemic Plan.

Steps the board has taken in the Preparedness Phase include:

- Staying in regular contact with the local Public Health unit for information updates.
- Communicating updates about COVID-19 in a variety of ways, including on-going communication to school communities and dedicated webpage on the board website for coronavirus COVID-19: www.ugdsb.ca/covid19
- Earlier this year, board staff reviewed and revised our Pandemic Plan as part of a larger policy review. A board staff committee is actively referencing the Plan as it relates to COVID-19, taking steps to ensure we are as prepared as we can be.
- The board is monitoring absenteeism for increased absences at schools and reporting absences to Public Health.
- We are doing enhanced cleaning at schools related to our regular flu season and have distributed additional hand sanitizer to school offices and portables.

...2

Upper Grand District School Board

- Martha MacNeil; Chair
- Barbara Lustgarten Evoy; Vice-Chair
- Mark Bailey
- Jen Edwards
- Jolly Bedi
- Mike Foley
- Linda Busuttil
- Robin Ross
- Gail Campbell
- Lynn Topping

- We are working with schools to assess scheduled international school trips on a case-by-case basis.
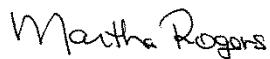
Public Health advises that the best way to reduce the risk of infection is to practice general infection prevention control. This includes:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill.
- Stay home when you are ill.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

We will continue to take steps to ensure that we are as prepared as we can be and will continue to communicate updates as the situation evolves.
We encourage all staff to continue to follow Public Health for updates at
https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/your-health/novel-coronavirus-covid-19

Sincerely,

Martha Rogers
Director of Education & Secretary-Treasurer