

March 3, 2020

Dear students, parents and staff,

One of the most amazing things our students get to experience in school is travel. The ability to travel internationally, to experience different languages, cultures and geography is a rich and rewarding experience. As you can imagine, these trips require extensive planning and support to succeed. Unfortunately, this year we are faced with a global challenge with the outbreak of COVID-19. The situation around the world is complex, rapidly changing and impacting us all.

As in previous years, we have a number of sponsored school field trips planned over spring break. Students and teachers from Surrey and White Rock will circle the globe as they visit numerous countries. With the outbreak and corresponding travel advisories, the district is taking the necessary precautions by cancelling some trips.

After careful consideration, we are cancelling trips to Italy, Japan, and France due to the risk of harm for students and staff travelling to these regions. For all other trips, we will continue to monitor the situation daily and respond to any changes with the Government of Canada's [Travel Health Notices](#). We are currently working with the travel providers and individual schools to review the insurance policy. Schools will communicate directly with affected students and families about next steps related to refunds.

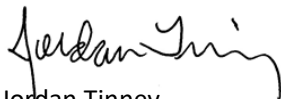
With these cancellations, there are a number of factors we considered, including the Health Canada advisories. We also took into account the very real potential that staff and students may be quarantined, either overseas, or upon their return to Canada.

This is an evolving situation, and timely and accurate information is critical. We want to ensure parents, students and staff have time to adjust their plans, and we need to be prepared that between now and spring break there likely will be many changes to the situation.

We are also asking parents and staff who are travelling overseas for personal travel to please consider issues such as needing to be quarantined upon returning to Canada. We are already seeing instances of students returning from countries where the current recommendation is to "avoid places where you cannot easily separate yourselves from others" for 14 days upon return to Canada. The current areas of most significant concern are China, Northern Italy, Iran, Japan and South Korea. Please note impacted areas may change and expand as the situation continues to evolve.

As always, the best precautions people can take while at home is to wash hands, use hand-sanitizer, and cover your mouth if you cough to reduce the spread of germs. It will take a collective effort to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and while we regret to have to cancel any planned activities, we see this as a wise and necessary precaution. We will be working directly with those schools impacted by the trip cancellations.

Sincerely,



Jordan Tinney  
Superintendent of Schools/CEO

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