



School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

Board of Education of School District No. 71

607 Cumberland Road
Courtenay, B.C. V9N 7G5
Fax (250) 334 5552
Telephone (250) 334 5500

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

March 06, 2020

Dear Parents,

Re: Novel Corona Virus Covid-19, Update/Cancellation of all International Travel to China, Italy and Germany

The Comox Valley School District possess robust plans to safeguard all students, staff and visitors with respect to the emerging, world-wide, health threat, COVID-19. While the threat in British Columbia remains low for transmission, the Government of Canada has identified other jurisdictions in the World where there exists a much greater risk of exposure and transmission. Out of an abundance of caution the Government of Canada has advised that all non-essential travel to these areas be cancelled.

On Tuesday, in response to these Government issued warnings, the daily changes in public health information and the continued rise in confirmed cases abroad, the Comox Valley School District made the decision to cancel all overseas travel to both China and Italy for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year as we cannot ensure the safety of our students and staff. This was a difficult decision, and one we did not make lightly. The safety of students and staff is paramount. The impact of COVID-19 is serious, and we must take the appropriate steps to ensure student and staff safety.

In the interim, we have continued to monitor the situation closely in Germany. On Wednesday, the German Health Minister advised that transmission of COVID 19 was now present in fifteen of sixteen German states. Given this new information, out of an abundance of caution and in advance of any Federal Government advisory to restrict non-essential travel to Germany the Comox Valley School District has made the decision to cancel the Germany exchange trip during Spring Break of 2020 as we cannot ensure the safety of our students and staff.

We are aware that this decision brings with it disappointment for the loss of a long anticipated learning opportunity for your children. We also understand that there is potential for a financial impact to all families as a result of this cancellation. Please know that this was difficult, but the health and welfare of your child was at the forefront of our decision amidst this unique and dynamic World Health crisis.

We are working alongside our International Education staff to ascertain the financial impact to families due to this cancellation and are developing a compensation package to address this matter.

We will continue to monitor this World-Wide health crisis as we have school trips planned for the Spring of 2020 into the United States, and in particular to Washington State where a state of emergency has been declared in response to the outbreak of COVID-19.

We will continue to work alongside our International Education staff, school administration and public health officials in the weeks and months ahead to monitor this situation and to keep you fully apprised of further strategies to safeguard all who learn, work and visit within our school district.

Respectfully,

Tom Demeo
Superintendent of Schools School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)