



Bringing Learning to Life!

# Vancouver Island North School District No. 85

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March 10, 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Staff,

The ability to travel internationally, to experience different languages, cultures and geography is a rich and rewarding experience for students. 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.

This year, we have a school sponsored field trip planned over spring break. Students and teachers from Port Hardy Secondary School had planned to visit some countries in Europe. With the outbreak of COVID-19 and corresponding travel advisories, the School District is taking the necessary precautions by cancelling this trip.

It was after careful consideration that we are cancelling the planned trip to Italy and Germany due to the risk of harm for students and staff travelling to these regions. 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 Port Hardy Secondary School to review the insurance policy. The school organizers will communicate directly with affected students and families about next steps related to refunds.

With this cancellation, 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 school impacted by the trip cancellation.

Yours Sincerely,

Carol Robertson  
Superintendent of Schools/CEO