

Emails sent to local highschool as well as local school district –

March 9, 2020

Good morning, ...,

Following up on our chat last Friday I have put together some ideas on how ... might be proactive in addressing and containing the COVID-19 spread, keeping students, staff and extended community safe and healthy.

I have compiled these after sifting through dozens of medical and scientific, as well as public health docs. Happy to discuss further and/or offer my support in helping ... navigate this situation proactively.

Warmly,  
Miriam

March 11, 2020

Thank you for your response and updates. I am glad to hear ... is now taking extra precautions on hygiene and informing the students about 'social distancing'.

As mentioned before, I hope you consider the information about 'social distancing as the most effective way to flatten the exponential curve' and see if there are ways to ensure that students can continue their studies after spring break online if needed (self-quarantine for 14 days after travel, sick, or choose not to attend because they are concerned about how much is being contained and spread at schools).

Here a link to a thoughtful discussion with Nicholas Christakis, a social scientist and physician at Yale University on whether or not to close schools as a proactive measure, and if yes, when: <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/03/does-closing-schools-slow-spread-novel-coronavirus>

You may have heard that Harvard announced yesterday it is moving all courses to online starting March 23 (after spring break) as are many other schools across the States  
>> <https://boston.cbslocal.com/2020/03/10/coronavirus-harvard-classes-online-spring-break>

And here one to yesterday's CBC update on how New Brunswick is handling schools during this COVID-19 situation: <https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.5491240>

Thank you for your continued attention to this matter, and I hope you have a restful, fun and healthy spring break :)

Miriam

**Community Preparedness - Suggestion recommendations for ... Highschool in regard to the Coronavirus and its implications on our students, families and community**

**For students and staff:**

- **Wash your hands with soap for 20-30 seconds.** Wash them often. The current best guess is that coronavirus is transmitted via close contact and surface

contamination. Wash your hands each time you enter a new building and after being in shared spaces (classrooms especially), in addition to the standard practice of washing after using the bathroom and before eating. Hand sanitizer also kills this virus, as does rubbing alcohol (the main ingredient in hand sanitizer).

- If you are **sick, stay home**.
- **No handshaking!** Use a fist bump, slight bow, elbow bump, etc.
- **Use ONLY your knuckle** to touch light switches, handrails, door handles etc..
- **Open doors with your closed fist or hip** – do not grasp the handle with your hand, unless there is no other way to open the door. Especially important on bathroom and doors.
- **Facial awareness:** Don't touch your face. Or put your fingers in your mouth, or nose or on your lips, or in your eyes. Surface contact works like this: you touch something dirty. Maybe it's an elevator button. Virus sticks to your hands. Then you rub your eye. Then you touch your sandwich, and put the sandwich in your mouth. Now there is virus in your eyes and mouth. An observational study found that people sitting at a desk working touched their eyes, nose, or lips between 3 and 50 times per hour.
- If possible, **cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard. Use your elbow only if you have to.** The clothing on your elbow will contain infectious virus that can be passed on for up to a week!
- Wash your hands with soap for 10-20 seconds and/or use a greater than 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer **whenever you return home** from ANY activity that involves locations where other people have been.
- **Only visit grandparents if you are healthy.** Stay away if you are sick. They are the most vulnerable.
- **Keep your immune system strong!** Vitamin C and Zinc are good for this. Avoid sugar :)

#### **As a school -- hygiene & containment:**

- Get creative - is there a way **school curriculum can be offered online** if needed? If students can keep up with their classes through online options, this will greatly encourage them to stay home when sick, self-quarantine if concerned or following spring break travel, and/or not fall behind in the case of a school closure (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/04/world/coronavirus-schools-closed.html>).
- Give your **employees clear directions to stay home if they feel sick** and give employees **options to work from home** if possible.

- This could be a **great learning opportunity** for everyone - here some ideas on how to communicate about COVID-19 with students and learn from this global event: <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/03/03/how-teachers-are-talking-to-students-about.htm>
- Here is a way of teaching about the **exponential nature of a pandemic** and how each action taken can make a big difference (great for math teachers!) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kas0tlxDvrg&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR31mZPN4vvpZZuZIXu2qNyhcvMg9df8cvDJ-fA0ok31qSolNiPfbSuCUU8>
- Put **disinfectant at all school entrances to all public spaces with clear directions** to use them.
- **Educate (repeatedly) all students on the necessity of hand and face hygiene.** Because of the exponential rate of spread, there is a meme in Switzerland on the daily news currently that says: "If you infect 1 person, you have infected 1000".
- Ensure the **washroom facilities** (esp. taps for handwashing) are **in good working order**, with plenty of soap and warm water, so the kids can full-fill their preventive measures of hand washing
- Epidemiologist Malia Jones, PhD, MPH suggests, "If I were in charge of a school setting, I'd be hand sanitizing the s\*\*\* out of the kids' hands, including in and out of each space, and taking temperatures at the door. I am planning to email our school nurse right after this to ask if they need my volunteer help cleaning surfaces.
- **Daily sanitation** of doorknobs, light switches, shared keyboards at schools, salad bar tongs and other commonly-touched surfaces, and moving from green cleaners to more powerful **anti-viral cleaners**, including alcohol and bleach, for the immediate future.
- Provide **alcohol-based hand sanitizer** at the front of the cafeteria line and encourage all students to sanitize before eating/serving food.
- Posting **Public Health Canada hygiene tips** in all bathrooms, offering advice on hand washing and other ways to stay safe.

And to close, here a link to **an example of a country (Taiwan) that has been proactive rather than reactive, with very encouraging results:**

<https://www.voanews.com/science-health/coronavirus-outbreak/why-taiwan-has-just-42-coronavirus-cases-while-neighbors-report>

## References:

Recommendations for individual hygiene, prevention and containment from eminent pathologist Dr James Robb: <https://slippedisc.com/2020/03/some-expert-advice-on-coronavirus/>

and from Public Health Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html>

Community transmission now in BC: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-bc-records-first-known-community-transmission-case-of-coronavirus/>

Possible long-term implications of the virus:  
<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/health/health-problems/chinese-doctors-say-coronavirus-like-a-combination-of-sars-and-aids-can-cause-irreversible-lung-damage/news-story/f58f19c5eeae99b845c54e2d2b9305ca>