

October 8, 2020

Dear Parents, teachers, staff and students,

We wanted to make you aware that we are seeing increased COVID-19 activity in the City of Saskatoon, in addition to the rest of Saskatchewan. We are asking everyone to be extra vigilant. Protect yourself and your family at all times during the pandemic by following all public health recommendations and ensuring you do your part to stop the spread.

As the public health situation across Saskatchewan continues to evolve, the one constant is the need to maintain a united effort of parents, students, and school staff to keep our communities safe. We are all doing our part, and it is truly remarkable to see the work that can be accomplished when we work together to prevent COVID-19 infections within our daily bubbles at school, home, after school programs and other recreation activities.

With that, we are asking that you keep a close eye on how big your bubble has actually become as you have increased your activities. As the risk of local transmission increases, now is the time to reset your household and reduce the risk to those who matter most to you.

We are all now part of other cohorts: in the workplace, at school, at extracurricular activities. Observing the necessary public health guidance in each of these settings and keeping our close contact list short is a vital step in reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Please remember the following:

- Your extended household is the people you can hug and touch, or those who can become part of your daily and weekly routines. This should be 15 people or less. Ideally, it is only members of your direct household.
- Assess your extended household. Does it include children in school settings, school staff, essential employees, or vulnerable populations like seniors or those with underlying health conditions? Consider that all of your contacts are now their contacts, too.
- In the event that you are required to provide your activities and contacts as part of a public health contact investigation, can you name all those individuals you have come into close contact with over the last two weeks? If you cannot, adjust your routines and close contacts.
- Stay home from all activities and workplaces even if you are experiencing **mild** symptoms.

When making travel plans with your family, we remind you to consider whether or not your travel is **truly essential**. This includes travel within, outside our province or outside of Canada. We are seeing a number of outbreaks declared throughout our province, and in other jurisdictions, putting everyone at increased risk of potential exposure to COVID with non-essential travel playing a role.

As we approach the upcoming long weekend, we also ask that you keep your festivities small and defer all interactions with others if you feel **any symptoms** compatible with COVID-19. Symptoms include: fever, cough, headache, muscle and/or joint aches and pains, sore throat, chills, runny nose, nasal congestion, conjunctivitis, dizziness, fatigue, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite (difficulty feeding for children), loss of sense of taste or smell, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing. An online self-assessment is available at www.Saskatchewan.ca/COVID19.

It is also important to continue self-screening; enhanced hand hygiene for students and staff; masking when physical distancing cannot be maintained; cohorting (or grouping) of students to reduce interaction outside of class; enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of school facilities and buses; and, restrictions on visitors within schools.

The Health Canada COVID Alert app is available to all Saskatchewan residents at no cost in the Apple and Google Play app store. The app is another tool available to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 by letting people know of possible exposures without sharing any personal information.

From the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, every action we have taken has been based on the principle of keeping your children safe, and by extension the safety of yourselves and your communities as well. Clearly, we all have an important role to play. Please keep yourself personally informed by regularly visiting the Government of Saskatchewan's website for the latest information on COVID, including safety guidelines at www.Saskatchewan.ca/COVID19.

Thank-you for all you are doing to keep our schools and our Saskatoon community safe.

Sincerely,



Dr. Simon Kapaj
MD, MPH, ABPM, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer – Saskatoon
Medical Director – Environmental Public Health, Saskatchewan Health Authority

Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.

NOTICE OF CONFIDENTIALITY: This information is for the recipient(s) listed and is considered confidential by law. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, disclosure, copying or communication of the contents is strictly prohibited.