

Dear OCDSB Families,

Today, the Ontario government has announced that all schools will be closed to students from March 14 to April 5th, 2020. This includes all OCDSB elementary and secondary schools. At this time, there are many unanswered questions about this decision, including the impact on childcare programs and services, March Break camps, community use permits, administrative buildings, school year calendar, dual credit programs, and many other issues. The Ministry has announced that some additional details will follow and some decisions will be local board decisions. What we are able to confirm at this time is that students will not attend school during this period.

This decision was made to help reduce the spread of the Coronavirus. The Coronavirus is a respiratory infection which causes flu like symptoms including fever, cough and difficulty breathing. You can learn more about the virus from this [Public Health Canada Coronavirus Fact Sheet](#). It will take our collective effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

We know that many families will be travelling during March Break. **If you plan to travel over March Break, please take all safety precautions. For travel outside of Canada**, follow [Government of Canada Travel Advisories](#) and be aware that this situation is changing rapidly. Please check the [Ottawa Public Health recommendations](#) for self-isolation, prior to your return. We would hope that all students are in a position to return to school on April 6, 2020.

How can you stay healthy?

Some of the things that you can do to help reduce the risk and possible spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze;
- avoid touching your face and eyes;
- if you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm;
- reduce your attendance at large public gatherings;
- stay home if you are ill; and
- get a yearly influenza vaccination, available from clinics and pharmacies.

Here is some additional information that might be helpful.

- Information on [Hand Hygiene](#) and this [Handwashing](#)
- [Ottawa Public Health website](#)
- [Government of Canada Travel Advisories](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

We know that families have lots of questions about this decision. At this time, we are working with the Ministry and health partners to get answers to these questions. As soon as we know more, we will share that information with you.

Thank you for your patience and support during this challenging time.