

Update from Lacombe Christian School, re: COVID-19 Pandemic

March 13, 2020

Dear Lacombe Christian School Parents,

In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, we need to be aware of symptoms and take precautions concerning this illness. We have been spending extra time cleaning and disinfecting at school, especially common touch areas (door knobs, microwave touch pads, etc.). We would ask that your child stay at home and not come to school if your child is exhibiting any illness or flu like symptoms. We acknowledge that this may be a significant inconvenience to students and parents.

COVID-19 Update:

Information on COVID-19 is changing rapidly. Parents and families are asked to stay informed by visiting Alberta Health Services Website.

Lacombe Christian School continues to take direction from Alberta Health in regards to the ongoing health and safety of students and staff related to the COVID-19 Virus.

Lacombe Christian School is presently working on an Administrative Procedure to guide decisions regarding a Pandemic Response. The Board of Directors will be reviewing this document on Monday March 16th at their Board Meeting. Administration will update you once the meeting has taken place.

Over the past several weeks, there has been increased coverage of the spread of the COVID-19 Virus around the world. There are currently a number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Alberta. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause respiratory illness in people, ranging from mild common colds to severe illnesses. Novel coronaviruses are new strains of the virus that have not been previously identified in humans.

The following information seeks to guide our families in accessing accurate information about this virus.

Where can we get updates information on the COVID-19?

- Alberta Health is the most accurate source of information on the COVID-19 Virus. Visit the Alberta Health Website.

What should we do if someone in our family was exposed to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19?

- If you were in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days, it is recommended that you self-isolate and limit your contact with others for 14 days and call Health Link 811 for additional advice. Please contact Lacombe Christian School as well.

What does self-isolate mean?

- Self-Isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people.

What should we do if our child has to miss school because they have to self-isolate?

- If your child or someone in your family needs to self-isolate because you were exposed to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19, or if you have travelled to an affected region within the past 14 days, and are experiencing symptoms, please follow the following steps:
 1. Call Health Link 811 for health advice or testing if you are experiencing symptoms
 2. Contact Lacombe Christian School to advise them of the reason for the absence.

What do we do if a staff member or student at Lacombe Christian School has been asked to self-isolate?

- Self-isolation is a cautious approach and if that person has no symptoms, they are not considered to have exposed others to the virus. Other students or staff do not need to stay at home because of this. Health officials involved with the person or families who have been asked to self-isolate will already be ensuring that all appropriate precautions are being taken.

What should we do if we think someone in our family may have COVID-19?

- If you have symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing and have travelled outside Canada or have been exposed to someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19, stay home and call Health Link 811 first. Call 911 if you are seriously ill and need immediate medical attention and inform them that you may have COVID-19.

Will Lacombe Christian School close school to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

- At present, school closures have not been recommended for COVID-19 prevention in Alberta. This may change as schools in Ontario are closed. The decision to close schools would only be made in close collaboration with Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services or by direction under the Public Health Act.

Our family recently returned from a vacation. Should we keep our children home from school?

Alberta's Chief Medical Officer recommends the following precautionary measures:

- If a student has visited Italy, a Grand Princess Cruise, Iran, or China's Hubei Province in the last 14 days, it is recommended that they self-isolate until 2 weeks have passed since that visit. This is a recommendation even if they are feeling well. Parents should call Health Link 811 for additional precautions and follow-up testing if their children have travelled anywhere outside of Canada and experienced any of the following:
 - Contact with someone who was suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19
 - Have symptoms such as a cough or a fever

Our family is planning a vacation over spring break. What should we consider before travelling?

- Decisions regarding whether or not to travel remain the responsibility of families for travel. The COVID-19 situation is evolving rapidly with increased global spread, so it is important that people have up to date information to inform these decisions. Travel advisories are issued by the federal government.

If you were in a hospital where COVID-19 cases were diagnosed or treated:

- Monitor yourself daily for 14 days after leaving the area for symptoms like fever, cough, or shortness of breath. At the first sign of symptoms, immediately self-isolate and call Health Link 811.

Our child is very anxious about COVID-19. How can we support them?

- COVID-19 can make students (and families) anxious. Parents are encouraged to discuss with children their fears and explain how students may reduce anxiety by having some control in dealing with COVID-19 (i.e. understanding COVID-19, hand washing, etc.). Parents may find the resource "Talking to Children about Coronavirus" from the National Association of School Psychologists a helpful tool.
- Advise them of steps they can take to stay healthy:
 - Wash Hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (sing the ABC's to measure time), especially after coughing or sneezing. They should also wash their hands before leaving home and on arrival at school, after using the bathroom, after

breaks and gym class, before eating any food, including snacks, and before leaving school.

- o Cough and sneeze into arm or tissue
- o Stay home if they are not feeling well
- o Keep hands away from face and mouth
- o Stay healthy by eating healthy foods, keeping physically active and getting enough sleep.

What actions is Lacombe Christian School taking to ensure that the school is sanitized?

- Custodial staff continue to ensure the continued health and safety of our staff and students, we continue to take the following preventive measures:
- Our custodians have increased their cleaning and sanitizing practices at school.
- All high-touch areas in school have been sanitized to help prevent the spread of germs.
- Custodians will wipe down/sanitize door hardware, drinking fountains, telephones and other high touch areas as they clean our school.

What else is Lacombe Christian School doing to address COVID-19?

- Lacombe Christian School continues to receive and review updates information from Alberta Health Services and Alberta Education. This information is changing at a rapid pace and as new or revised information becomes available, updates will be shared with the school staff, Board, and parents. We continue to encourage everyone to follow the following preventive measures such as:
 - Frequent handwashing
 - Coughing or sneezing into your elbow or tissue
 - Dispose of tissues immediately and wash your hands
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth with unwashed hands
 - Stay at home and avoid others when feeling ill
 - Don't share items that may have saliva on them such as drinking glasses and water bottles.
 - Clean high touch surfaces such as taps, door knobs, and countertops frequently.
 - Contact your primary health care provider or Health Link by calling 811 if you have questions or concerns about your health.