



Fort St. James Secondary School

School District No. 91 – Nechako Lakes

P.O. Box 220, Fort St. James, B.C. V0J 1P0

Telephone: 250-996-7126 Fax: 250-996-7708

November 26, 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians:

This letter is to provide notification of a confirmed COVID-19 exposure incident at our school on Nov. 19 – 20th, please see the attached letter from Dr. Rakel Kling, our Medical Officer of Health.

We are working closely with Northern Health and Dr. Kling as they begin the process of contact tracing.

As mentioned, Public Health have initiated their contact tracing processes to identify any individuals that need to self-isolate or self-monitor for symptoms. If you do not receive a phone call or letter from public health officials, please continue to attend school and monitor for symptoms compatible with COVID-19 as per our shared expectations. The safety and well-being of our students, families, and staff remains our highest priority.

Please be reassured that our school will continue to implement the strict protocols and procedures we have in place so that children can continue to attend school as safely as possible.

As always, please continue to use all the shared public health guidelines to keep your family safe.

If you have any health-related questions, please contact Northern Health as per the attached letter.

Sincerely,

Craig Houghton
Principal

November 26, 2020

RE: Potential COVID-19 exposure to children and staff of Fort St. James Secondary School, Fort St. James, in attendance November 19-20th, 2020.

Northern Health Authority has informed the principal of Fort St. James Secondary School that students and staff may have been in contact with a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 on November 19-20th, 2020.

Every school in BC has a COVID-19 safety plan in place. In this circumstance, the safety plan was followed precisely - and because of this, the risk of additional cases is very low. We recognize that learning of a potential exposure to COVID-19 may cause concern for families, and we hope to address some of those concerns with the following information.

COVID-19 is spread by respiratory droplets, when a person who is infected coughs or sneezes. If you are in close contact with an infected person, the virus can enter the body if droplets get into the eyes, nose or throat. It can also be spread when a healthy person touches an object or surface (e.g. a doorknob or a table) with the virus on it, and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes before washing their hands.

Exposure to a confirmed case does not mean you or your child will become sick with COVID-19. COVID-19 has a very low infection rate in children, and most are not at high risk. We expect to see COVID-19 cases in various community settings, including school settings, but we expect the risk of transmission in school to be low in most circumstances. The risk of transmission becomes more significant if someone is considered a close contact.

NH public health staff follows up directly with anyone who is identified as a **close contact** of a lab confirmed case. It is important to note that a close contact is a person who has been in direct, face-to-face contact for prolonged periods of time with an infectious case. People with COVID-19 are considered contagious (infectious) from 48 hours before onset of their symptoms (before they may realize they are sick), up until 10 days after their symptoms began. More information on the definition of a high-risk close contact, can be found here: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/case-definitions/covid-19-\(novel-coronavirus\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/case-definitions/covid-19-(novel-coronavirus))

If you or your child has no symptoms and you have not been informed personally by public health that they are a close contact and should self-isolate – you and your children are not required to self-isolate. However, please take extra care to monitor your child/children for symptoms until **December 4th, 2020 midnight** (which is 14 days from the last date of possible contact with the confirmed case). Testing is not recommended or needed if you or your child has no symptoms because it is not accurate or useful when a person has no symptoms. If you or your child develops symptoms, a health assessment is recommended via your primary care provider or by calling Northern Health's COVID-19 Information Line and Online Clinic at 1-844-645-7811.

If you are identified as a close contact, you will be contacted directly by public health, and supported in any actions you need to take (such as self-monitoring, or self-isolation). If you are not identified as a close contact you will not be contacted directly, as the risk of infection is very low.

That said, everyone is encouraged to monitor yourself and your children for symptoms. Testing is available for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, however mild. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough or worsening of chronic cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Muscle aches

While less common, symptoms can also include:

- Stuffy nose
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Dizziness, confusion
- Abdominal pain
- Skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/symptoms>

If you or your child have symptoms, please call your Primary Care Provider or the Northern Health Virtual Clinic for an assessment and testing: 1-844-645-7811

If you or your child has symptoms, please see Appendix C in COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings to determine if your child can go to school with those symptoms.

There are many things you can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your community. Please visit the BCCDC website for more information: www.bccdc.ca.

In health,



Dr. Rakel Kling MSc, MPH, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer
Northern Health