

January 14, 2022

Dear Students, Parents, Caregivers and Staff,

As we wrap up this first week back from Winter Break, I wanted to follow up on some key changes.

Fraser Health has made changes to the notification process that we've been supporting them with. Outlined in a recent letter they shared with us, what they are seeing is that "the Omicron variant spreads rapidly and, as such, contact tracing is a less effective measure in the timely management of COVID-19." As a result of this, Public Health will no longer be contacting everyone who tests positive, and this means they will not issue exposure notices through our schools or on their website. Fraser Health has transitioned to individual self-management (i.e., individuals care for themselves, engaging with health care providers when needed) and will continue to issue public notifications in cases where a declared outbreak has occurred.

In order to continue to monitor and manage COVID-19, across the province health authorities will now be using absentee rates to track what's happening in individual districts, schools and classrooms. Our school-based staff are carefully monitoring attendance every day, as they look for and are reporting instances of unusually high absences, for this time of year.

**Here's what you can do to help us accurately report our attendance anomalies to Fraser Health:**

- Please make sure that if your child is going to be away for any reason that you report the absence, directly to your individual school(s), as early as possible.
- **When you report the absence, please be clear about reason:**
  - **If your child is ill (any type of illness), state "illness" as the reason.**
  - Please note: if your child has been instructed to self-isolate because they are a confirmed close contact to someone with COVID-19, but are not showing symptoms and have not tested positive themselves, this is NOT AN ILLNESS.
  - If you are keeping your child home for any reason other than an illness (e.g. an appointment, family vacation, out of an abundance of caution or some other "by choice" reason), please clearly specify why your child will be absent.

We are all awaiting more details about how the Province of BC will be rolling out the anticipated wider access to Rapid Testing kits in the community. But for those who are already using the kits, we wanted to share this resource, the BC Centre for Disease Control's instructions for people who have tested positive for COVID-19 (including information on how self-isolate, how to report your positive test results, and how to determine and notify close contacts): <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/if-you-have-covid-19>

If you have any further questions about how Fraser Health is managing COVID-19, you can find out more here: <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/coronavirus/#.YeHFSmjMKUk>. If you have health related questions about COVID-19 please call 811.

Thank you for all the hard work and understanding as we continue forward, together,



Karim Hachlaf  
Superintendent of Schools / CEO