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March 12th, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 (Coronavirus) to be a pandemic. It is important to note that this declaration is related to the spread of a disease, rather than the severity of the illness it causes. We continue to rely on Alberta Health Services and their advice regarding COVID-19 as they are providing frequent updates and suggestions of action that schools need to take in response to this situation. "Albertans are encouraged to visit this [link](#) for guidance around prevention, testing and other useful information." The symptoms that appear to accompany COVID-19 are a fever, a cough and difficulty breathing. Should you or members of your family exhibit these symptom, we encourage you to follow the recommendations of [Alberta Health Services](#) and consult with [Health Link 811](#).

Ever since the information about COVID-19 was released, Buffalo Trail Public Schools has been taking extraordinary measures to ensure the safety of staff and students. Some of the steps we have taken or will be taking in the very near future include:

- 1) Ensuring that all of our antibacterial and soap dispensers in all of our schools are filled and accessible.
- 2) Focusing custodial services to the cleaning of touch surfaces with a safe and reliable disinfectant.
- 3) Removing access to bubble water fountains and direct students to the use of personalized water bottles and the use of either bottle filler stations or bottle water dispensers.
- 4) Repeatedly reviewing and reminding students of appropriate hygiene practices that includes frequent hand washing using soap and hot water, coughing or sneezing into your elbow or sleeve, avoiding sharing of food or beverage containers, avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands and limiting skin to skin contact by using fist pumps or elbow taps.

We would appreciate your assistance in making sure that your child understands the importance of following these preventative types of practices. If your child does not already have a personal water bottle for school, we would ask that you provide one. Sending it to school filled with fresh water from home and bringing it home to be washed and refilled would be helpful to avoid long line ups at the water bottle fillers.

If you or your family is travelling over the next while, you are encouraged to check the [Government of Canada](#) website for the most current travel advisories. When you return from travel, or if you are concerned your family has been exposed to illness, you may want to stay at home for a period of time if recommended by Alberta Health Services. Students who are absent from school will be supported by their teachers so they can continue their learning.

As always, Buffalo Trail Public Schools puts the safety of staff and students as the number one priority. We are monitoring this situation very closely and will be quick to act should new information become available. Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact your school Principal.

Sincerely,

Bob Allen
Superintendent