

Public Schools Branch Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory illnesses. Human coronaviruses are not uncommon and usually cause mild illnesses, like the common cold.

2. How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus is most commonly spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes, and the droplets land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby, or inhaled into the lungs. You may also catch it from touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands

3. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include: fever, cough, difficulty breathing. If you experience these symptoms, call 811 for medical advice.

4. Am I at risk of getting very sick with COVID-19?

Your risk of severe illness may be higher if you have a weakened immune system. This may be the case for: older people or people with chronic disease (for example: diabetes, cancer, heart, renal, or chronic lung disease).

5. How can I protect myself and others?

To protect yourself and others from getting sick take the following precautions:

- Avoid mass gatherings;
- Reconsider attending social gatherings where a 2-meter distance is not possible;
- Wash your hands often;
- Cough/sneeze into elbow;
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth with hands;
- Cough in tissues and throw away;
- Stay home if you are sick;
- Avoid contact with sick person;
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

6. Should I wear a protective mask?

Masks are not recommended for healthy people. Sick people may reduce the spread of infection by wearing a surgical mask if they need to go out for a medical appointment or some other important reason.

7. What should I do if I have returned from a trip outside of PEI?

Self-isolate for 14 days upon your return from all travel outside of PEI. This includes adults and children.

8. If someone I live with has traveled out of the province, do I need to self-isolate too?

If the person who has traveled and is self-isolating is not showing symptoms, those living with them can continue daily activities as normal and follow good hygiene practices. If the person self-isolating is experiencing symptoms, everyone in the household should also self-isolate and monitor symptoms until test results are confirmed.

9. If someone in a family returns from travel how does that person self-isolate and what does the rest of family have to do?

For more information on self-isolation, check out all current information on the [self-isolation guide](#).

10. What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation means you should voluntarily stay at home and not attend school, work or leave your home. For more information, check out the [self-isolation guide](#).

11. How do I practice “social distancing”?

The recommendations for social distancing from the Chief Public Health Officer, is that people stay at least two (2) meters, or six (6) feet apart and to avoid unnecessary close personal contact. [Learn more about social distancing.](#)

12. What should I do if I have been away and develop symptoms of COVID-19 after I get home?

- Immediately start to self-isolate for 14 days;
- Call 811;
- The person at 811 will take your information and pass it on to the clinic; and
- Within one day, someone from the clinic will call to tell you where to go to be tested for COVID-19.

13. When should I call 811?

Find out when you should [call 811 about COVID-19.](#)

14. What action is the Public Schools Branch taking to address COVID-19?

The Public Schools Branch is continuing to work with our partners to monitor the increasing number of cases of COVID-19 in PEI, Canada and around the world. As precautionary measures the following is taking place:

- All public schools in PEI are closed until May 11 and will be reassessed.
- All international school trips involving PSB students have been cancelled for the months of March, April and May.
- As of March 23, all school playgrounds have been closed, until further notice.
- Enhanced cleaning protocols will be implemented.
- Hand sanitizer* will be made available to our schools and branch offices.
*Limited supplies of disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer are available in schools and offices due to the increased requests for the product across the province.

15. What supports are available to students and their families through the PSB?

- Student home learning resources are available at <https://tinyurl.com/peihomelearning>
- Support for families with food insecurity is available through the PSB by emailing supportforfamilies@edu.pe.ca or calling 902-368-5155.
- Resources on stress, anxiety and mindfulness are available on the PSB’s Student Services Facebook page.

16. Will the Public Schools Branch be cancelling classes for students?

The Public Schools Branch obtains guidance in dealing with communicable diseases from the [PEI Chief Public Health Office.](#) We take our lead from them on any protocols and procedures.

Classes for students have been cancelled until May 11. There will be a reassessment during that time. As per the Chief Public Health Officer's comments, circumstances are changing quickly. The Public Schools Branch will communicate any changes that impact schools to students, parents, staff and the public.

17. Will the Public Schools Branch cancel other events and activities?

- All out-of-province school trips involving Public Schools Branch students have been cancelled for the month of March, April and May.
- Non-essential school-based events and activities are cancelled for March, April and May.
- The PEI School Athletic Association has suspended school sports, until further notice.
- Public access to school buildings and branch offices has been restricted.
- Community Use of School Facilities is suspended, until further notice.
- Meetings have been cancelled or will be conducted via alternative formats.

18. When school resumes, should students and staff with flu-like symptoms attend class/work?

Students, and staff who have influenza and/or are exhibiting flu-like symptoms should stay at home. Anyone who feels unwell and/or develops a fever and cough should call 811.

19. When school resumes, can the Public Schools Branch prohibit students or staff who exhibit signs of influenza from attending classes or work?

If a student or staff attends class or work exhibiting signs of influenza, feels unwell, and/or develops a fever and cough, it is recommended that they call 811. They will be asked to return home.

Staff are entitled to sick leave in accordance with their respective collective agreements. If staff have concerns about their sick leave entitlement, they may contact their supervisor and/or Human Resources.

20. How can I make sure I am getting the latest information from the Public Schools Branch?

The Public Schools Branch is sharing information on its website <https://edu.princeedwardisland.ca/psb/> and Facebook page.

21. Additional Information

Islanders with questions about COVID-19 should call PEI's toll-free information line at [1-800-958-6400](tel:1-800-958-6400). The information line is taking messages 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.

For the latest information, visit www.princeedwardisland.ca/covid19.