

December 9, 2020

Dear parents/guardians and families,

As the December winter break approaches, we realize that many of our traditional holiday celebrations pose a higher risk of spreading COVID-19. This holiday season, it's more important than ever to take steps to limit the spread of the virus. We invite you to join us in remaining committed to COVID-safe actions at home, at school, and in the community.

Family traditions, holidays and celebrations will look and feel different this year. Please do your part and choose your actions wisely to keep your family, our schools, and communities healthy and safe.

**Here are some ideas on how to safely enjoy the holiday season:**

- Bake some holiday treats—try out some new recipes.
- Attend a drive-in or drive-through event. Bring some snacks and drinks from home.
- Send a letter or card in the mail to family and friends. In this age of technology, it can be wonderful to receive a hand-written note.
- Set up a virtual Karaoke night or virtual dance party with your friends and sing and dance together to bring in the new year.
- Take a walk and enjoy the beautiful lights and fun sights in your neighbourhood.
- Surprise your loved ones by sending or safely dropping off a gift such as homemade treats, a cozy knitted scarf, or a holiday-themed craft.
- Open gifts during a video call with family or friends.
- Embrace our Canadian winter! Enjoy outdoor activities such as tobogganing, hiking, skiing, skating, and building a snowman or a fort.

**Here is how parents and guardians can help:**

- Continue to screen for COVID-19 symptoms as part of your daily routine. Families can use the Ministry of Health [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#). Stay home and follow the directions in the tool if you have symptoms, even if they are mild. You can book a COVID-19 test at your local [assessment centre](#).
- Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and your family. COVID-19 is still circulating at different levels around the province.
  - The safest way to spend the holidays this year is by only celebrating in person with the people you live with and celebrating virtually with everyone else.
  - Families should avoid travelling, except for essential reasons. If you do need to travel, try to reduce your number of close contacts for the two weeks before you go and after you return. Remind guests who are sick to stay home and reschedule for another time.
- Plan ahead and shop during non-peak hours and limit the number of trips you need to make. If possible, shop alone—try to avoid bringing other family members along unless it is absolutely necessary.

- Avoid gathering with those outside of your household. Please think twice—although private gatherings of up to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors are allowed under provincial legislation, non-essential gatherings of any size should be limited or avoided.
  - If you do host or attend a gathering, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and masking must be maintained. You should also take steps to minimize the risk for [safer holidays and celebrations](#).
  - Do not attend any in-person gatherings if you have any symptoms, even if they are mild.

While everyone understands the importance of traditions during the festive season, please find ways to celebrate safely and follow public health measures to protect yourself and your loved ones. We all have a responsibility to do the best we can to stop the spread of COVID-19. Our everyday actions either allow the virus to spread or stop it in its tracks.

Thank you for all the efforts and the sacrifices that you have made so far. We wish you a happy and safe holiday season.

Sincerely,

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