

A letter to families from the Province of B.C., Provincial Health Officer and VIHA
January 28, 2020

RE: Novel Coronavirus

This morning, the provincial government announced that B.C.'s first case of the Novel Coronavirus was found in a patient living in the lower mainland. As a result, the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) asked that the district share the following information:

- Island Health, the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and provincial and federal authorities are closely monitoring the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) from China.
- The risk of spread of this virus within British Columbia remains low at this time.
- All necessary precautions are being taken to prevent the spread of infection.
- Travelers arriving in Canada from affected areas are being assessed at the point of entry.
- Island Health and BC are prepared to quickly and accurately detect and respond to serious infectious diseases.
- It is not necessary for the general public to take special precautions beyond the usual measures recommended to prevent other common respiratory viruses. Regular handwashing, coughing or sneezing into your elbow sleeve, disposing of tissues appropriately and avoiding contact with sick people are important ways to prevent the spread of respiratory illness generally.
- People who have travelled to the main affected area who have symptoms of the coronavirus, such as fever and cough, should contact their primary care provider or call 8-1-1.
- If you have questions, see the BCCDC website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/about/news-stories/stories/2020/information-on-novel-coronavirus>
- For travel recommendations, see <http://www.travel.gc.ca/>
- Visit the WHO webpage for international information: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

VIHA recommends that there is no need to restrict any activities for international students or to cancel any mass school events or field trips to public spaces or events. Students who become ill following international travel can call 8-1-1 or see a health care provider.