Dear Palliser Families:

We wanted to update you on recent developments related to the COVID-19 virus (aka Coronavirus). Alberta Health Services is leading the response and providing the division with direction. Palliser will continue to follow guidance and direction from AHS in response to the virus.

**Student and Staff Illness**

Alberta Health Services has directed the following:

Any child or staff member showing any respiratory symptoms such fever, cough, fatigue, sore throat and/or muscle aches must stay home from school/child care.

If these symptoms develop during the school day parents will be contacted and the child will be sent home as per school procedures.

Students or staff members with a confirmed case of COVID-19 must receive clearance from public health officials before returning to school; students and staff members with a non COVID-19 or unknown respiratory illness should not return to school until 14 days after symptom onset.

**To help manage this situation and limit the spread of illness, if your child is sick, please do not send them to school.**

If you have medical questions, please contact the Alberta Health Link by dialing 811 or use the AHS self-assessment tool at:

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>

**Self-Isolation Following International Travel**

Alberta Health Services has directed that any Albertan who has travelled outside of Canada after March 12, 2020, must self-isolate for 14 days upon their return to Canada. If your child falls into this category, please do not send them to school until 14 days has elapsed.

**School Closure**

One of the common questions we receive from parents is: why aren’t schools being closed? That is a fair question. In situations such as this, the division takes direction from Alberta Health Services, they decide if schools will be closed due to COVID-19. The following is a release from the Alberta Government regarding school closure:

**On March 13, Alberta recommended that schools remain open at this time. The World Health Organization does not recommend school closures as the only way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in children.**

**Alberta continues to monitor the province’s situation carefully. If the situation warrants it, the Alberta government could direct the closure of an individual school, a group of schools, an entire school division, or all schools in the province. This would be a decision of Cabinet’s emergency management committee.**

We respect the expertise and dedication of the medical professionals in Alberta Health Services and remain confident they are making decision in the best interest of all Albertans in relation to school closures. We know AHS is monitoring the situation closely and reassessing their position related to school closures on an on-going basis.

We continue to work hard to protect the safety of your children and provide them with an excellent education. We appreciate your on-going support. If you would like more information regarding the response to COVID-19 in Palliser, please visit the home page of our website at

<https://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/about-us/news/post/message-to-parents>

Given the rapidly changing situation, information and guidance from the government is constantly being updated. For the most recent information please go to the Alberta Government’s COVID-19 page:

<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

or the Alberta Health Services website:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16997.aspx>