



January 11, 2021

Ref: 243137

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Cowichan Valley  
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Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your letter of December 17, 2020, regarding a request from the Cowichan Valley Teachers' Union for direction to families returning from travel after the winter holiday break. I appreciate that this is a very stressful time for everyone in the education sector and I am very grateful for everyone's hard work to keep everyone safe in schools.

Prior to the holiday break, the Ministry sent out communications to all school district superintendents regarding current provincial COVID-19 restrictions including a reminder to school and district administrators to communicate the importance of staying home when sick to their school communities. These notifications complemented broader government communications to the public, advising British Columbians to avoid non-essential travel during the break.

Ministry staff are continuing to work with public health officials on additional communications to school districts to remind students, families and staff of the importance of following health and safety precautions determined by the Provincial Health Officer. The provincial K-12 Education Restart Steering Committee, which meets on a weekly basis, also supports ongoing communication between the Ministry and our K-12 partners including teachers, support staff, administrators, school trustees, parents and Indigenous rightsholders. In addition, schools are expected to continue to implement comprehensive safety measures, in alignment with the [Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12](#), to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and help maintain safe learning environments for students and staff.

Thank you again for writing, and for your shared commitment to keeping British Columbia schools safe.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Whiteside  
Minister

pc: Naomi Nilsson, President, Cowichan Valley Teachers' Union