

Good morning all. Ey Swayel.

It's September 14th and I wanted to send out a message this week about "what can you expect when there is a confirmed case of COVID linked to a school?" I've had lots of questions about this and I want to provide some quick, easy answers for you around what that looks like. I'm going to start with a tale of two times: spring time and today. In the spring, in Surrey, we had three cases linked to schools, and in each one of those cases there was a confirmation of a positive case and we actually shut the school and closed the school for deep, deep cleaning for the day. Fast forward to the fall things are much different. First and foremost, our cleaning protocols are vastly different than they were in the spring and that impacts things a lot. The second and most important piece is 'how do we treat individual cases in our work with public health?' And it starts with if people have symptoms. And if people have symptoms they can be tested. In British Columbia right now, there are about 6000 tests a day, and of those tests, they turn around in about 24 hours, only 2% of those tests are going to come back positive. So we're learning a lot about our positivity rate, and what that means in terms of the number of cases that are coming forward. So again, 6000 tests a day, 2% will come back positive. If there is one that's positive and linked to a school, what does that mean? Well a confirmed case is actually interviewed by public health to determine when they were infected, how they were infected and most importantly, who is a close contact. If the case was infectious while they were in school, or if they became infected while at school, then public health will work with us and we will begin our communications plans and talking to our employees or our students. So, if there was a close contact, then those people will be directed by public health to self isolate and they're going to remain self isolated for up to 14 days, and if they have symptoms they'll be tested as well. But the thing that happens at the same time is a communications plan. Coordinated between health and the school district. We will let you know if there is a confirmed case at school, and if it impacts you at all. So you would potentially get a letter to be notified. We sent one of these out last week and there is going to be another one of those coming out today.

To go back to the main pieces, first and foremost, this starts with each and every one of us practicing physical distancing, practicing hand washing, not touching your face, wearing a mask where appropriate, all of these things matter, but most importantly, don't come to school or to work sick or with symptoms. But when it happens, Public Health has been absolutely fantastic, these people, this is their bread and butter, they are laser like in terms of who is positive, who's a close contact and only health can determine who is a close contact. They will reach out to those people, they will ask them to self isolate and if there is no need for concern, we roll on. So a very big difference between the spring, when we really didn't know as much, and we had a concern confirmed case we literally shut a school, that's likely not going to happen now. There will be cases in schools, there already has been, and we will be acting accordingly.

I hope this little video helps you understand just what we do. Most importantly, keep doing the good things you know to do: your personal hygiene; not sharing food; practicing social distancing; gathering practices at work like don't get in small rooms together, things like that. And those will be the little things that will keep us all safe. So I hope this helps.

Take care. Stay well. Hy'ce:pka

