



**December 30, 2021**

**Re: Change of return to school date - January 10, 2022**

BDDEC Parents & Guardians,

Over the holiday season the number of COVID-19 cases, including the Omicron variant, has increased throughout Canada and here in the Northwest Territories (NWT) and there has been significant travel both in and out of the NWT over the holiday period. The Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) has had an increased number of exposure notices, including multiple flights for those traveling into the territory, to help identify those individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 infection.

Several public health measures are available to reduce the risks for NWT residents, including:

- Distribution of rapid test kits to all participating schools
- Expansion of COVID-19 boosters for 16- and 17-year-olds
- Eligibility of 5-11 year olds for COVID-19 vaccines
- Availability of rapid testing kits for out-of-territory travelers at both Yellowknife and Inuvik airports to support a day of entry test and another one 72 hours later
- 72 hour recommendation that all out-of-territory travelers decrease gatherings to household only, wear well-fitted and constructed masks, and avoid high risk activities

With the increased risk of transmission, and the current state of COVID-19 cases throughout Canada, the OCPHO has recommended, and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment supports the recommendation, that schools remain closed for the first week of January. All NWT education bodies have agreed.

**NWT schools will be closed from January 4 – 7, 2022; there will be no online classes / remote learning during this time. Schools will open and students will return to in-class learning on Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022.** This will allow any students and families who have travelled back into the NWT to follow the recommendations of the CPHO for 72 hours, follow their Self-Isolation Plans (SIP), as appropriate, and help keep their communities safe from the potential spread of COVID-19. These recommendations also apply to any school staff who have traveled. School staff will focus on preparing supports for students upon their return to school on January 10, 2022.

# BEAUFORT DELTA DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL

Aklavik, Ft. McPherson, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok



Students who have received a rapid self-test kit prior to the holidays should test themselves the day before school starts.

This proactive approach is intended to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into the school setting, which could result in an outbreak and longer school closures.

With an understanding that this has an impact on students and families, this decision was made with the health and safety of our students and their families in mind.

For students preparing for diploma exams the weighting of diploma exams has been reduced to 10% for 2021-22. If a student prefers to be exempt from an upcoming diploma exam, they can request an exemption with their school administrative team.

Panbio COVID 19 testing kits are available for distribution currently in Inuvik. Any BDDEC parents/guardians in Inuvik needing a kit can contact Superintendent Devin Roberts via email at [droboterts@bdec.nt.ca](mailto:droboterts@bdec.nt.ca) or by phone at 867 678 5304. School based administrative teams throughout the Beaufort Delta will also be distributing COVID 19 testing kits January 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for your understanding. Stay safe everyone.

Mahsi, Quana Quyanainni

Devin Roberts  
Superintendent of Education