



April 11, 2021

Dear Chinook Staff and Families,

As you may be aware, there has been an increase in COVID-19 cases over the past week in both the province and in the Southwest region. Local representatives from the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) have made us aware of a few occurrences in our area over the Easter break where provincial protocols may not have been followed, and they may have led to some students and community members testing positive. Several Southwest communities may be impacted. Our public health partners firmly believe the safety measures in place in our schools have proven effective and school staff are committed to the same vigilance in enacting these measures. Students have also demonstrated their overwhelming willingness to do their part in following school safety protocols.

Student and staff safety remains our priority. However, our medical advisors wish to stress that school-based measures cannot compensate for what happens in the community. As such, they have asked us to reinforce through this communication the importance of a shared imperative that extends to community and household activity as critical in the battle against the virus, and keeping in-person learning within Chinook schools in place. Please do not gather with people from outside your bubble. Do not send your child to school if they have any symptoms whatsoever or they are deemed a close contact by public health. Follow all public health guidelines.

Some key points to consider:

- Schools play a crucial role in the overall well-being of our children. We will continue to provide support within our communities for schools to stay open. Schools have implemented strict protocols with many protective layers to prevent transmission.
- To prevent COVID-19 from spreading in schools, it's vital to stop the transmission of the virus in the community. Schools operate within communities and the safest way to prevent outbreaks is to make sure the virus never gets into schools in the first place.
- There's evidence from Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) stating that transmission is impacted by the number of contacts. Low transmission needs to occur in order to control VOCs (Variants of Concern). We need to keep community transmission low enough to be able to identify and control all transmission chains.

We thank you in advance for your understanding, support and cooperation. We are excited to welcome your children back to school this week!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Benesh".

Mark Benesh
Director of Education