



February 7, 2021

Dear Mount Pearl Senior High School Community,

On Sunday, February 7, two individuals at Mount Pearl Senior High tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. Public Health and the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) are working diligently to offer COVID-19 testing to relevant individuals and would like to inform you of the process we will be following moving forward. Please be advised we cannot provide any information as to the identity of the individuals due to established confidentiality policies.

In this situation it is unknown how long the individuals may have been COVID-19 positive, or to what extent the virus may have already spread throughout the school community.

Public Health officials conduct follow-up investigations whenever a new case of COVID-19 is identified. During this process, a contact tracing interview is conducted to identify any individuals that a case may have come into contact with during the time they may have been infectious.

Close contacts are determined by Public Health and will be contacted by Public Health officials. They will also be asked to self-isolate for 14 days after their last contact with the positive case and testing will be arranged as a priority.

At this time, Public Health has advised the School District:

- to suspend in-class instruction and all extra-curricular activities at Mount Pearl Senior High for several days during the investigation (exact number of days to be determined).
- that all students and staff must isolate away from household members until they receive further direction from Public Health officials;
- that household contacts of the student/teacher/staff (e.g. siblings or other family members) , do not need to isolate at this time unless the student/teacher/staff who attends Mount Pearl Senior High has symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive as a result of this investigation.
- that the duration of the isolation and the suspension of in-school classes will be determined by Public Health.
- that all students and staff from the school will be offered testing but Public Health will work with the school to identify which students should be tested first.
  - Testing will be completed on a priority basis, based on the Public Health contact tracing process.
  - Close contacts of the individuals will be contacted first for testing.
  - This is early in the investigation and those impacted **need not contact 811**.

Everyone has a role to play in reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. You and your family can take actions to stay healthy and reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus by continuing to follow the below precautions:

- Stay home when you or your child feel unwell
- Practice physical distancing to the greatest extent possible and wear a non-medical mask at times when you cannot, including in all indoor public spaces.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Reduce your number of close contacts and limit gatherings.
- Wash your hands often and well with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the absence of soap and water with at least 60 per cent alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve.

The school is preparing to switch to online remote learning as soon as possible.

Please be assured the safety of students and staff is the Public Health and the NLESD's top priority. Public Health officials will continue to work closely with officials from the NLESD to keep the school body updated.

We recognize that receiving this type of news can be stressful. Please see resources available at the following website dedicated to mental health and wellness: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/individuals-and-households/mental-health-and-wellness/>. For questions related to COVID-19, we encourage you to visit the government website dedicated to COVID-19: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>.

Sincerely,

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