



**YELLOWKNIFE EDUCATION
DISTRICT NO. 1**

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**ADMINISTRATION SCOLAIRE DE
DISTRICT N° 1 DE YELLOWKNIFE**

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December 30, 2021

To all Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1) parents and guardians:

Re: Amended return to school date for students – January 10, 2022

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). Cases of Omicron variant have surged throughout Canada while there has been significant travel in and out of the NWT. The Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) has issued 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 COVID-19 vaccines for 5 to 11 year-olds
- Availability of rapid testing kits for out-of-territory (OOT) 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 OOT 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, 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.

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.

Thank you for your understanding,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Vaselenak", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Cindi Vaselenak
Superintendent of Education/ CEO
Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1)
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