

**MEMO**

**To:** Chaperones/Families of Students Travelling  
**From:** Ed Walsh, Associate Director of Education (Programs and Human Resources)  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020

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The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District is cancelling District-approved travel to European countries, booked up until the end of April 2020, due to safety concerns associated with the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus. The District can cancel a trip within 24 hours of departure if students are travelling to (or through), a country determined to be a risk. If a destination has not yet been determined a risk, there is no guarantee travel insurance purchased by parents will be honoured - regardless of whether the District cancels the trip.

This decision is not taken lightly. We know many students will be disappointed. However, the safety of Newfoundland and Labrador students, wherever they are, is a priority concern for the District. Given the spread of COVID-19 is impacting multiple countries throughout the world, we are not prepared to have students travel to, or through, areas where authorities have advised that the virus is rapidly spreading.

The District has consulted with Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health, who has indicated her support for a low risk approach to student travel. The District has also been in contact with the major tour operators (EF Tours, Explorica) about the options available to families at this point. We have been advised that District cancellation due to an identified risk will allow for families to be compensated in some manner. There may be opportunities for full or partial reimbursement (based on individual insurance plans); rerouting to alternate destinations, rescheduling for alternate dates, or vouchers for future travel.

**However, each situation is unique, so the District encourages families to contact their school trip organizer, and work with the travel company and insurance provider, to determine available options. Parents may also be able to cancel of their own accord.**

The cancellations to date are a precautionary measure made in the interest of student safety, security, and public health. It is designed to reduce the risk of students being exposed to the COVID-19 coronavirus, or being quarantined in a foreign country as part of a school-sponsored trip. Meanwhile, the District is continuing to monitor the situation, in consultation with provincial health authorities and travel providers, and there may be more cancellations to other destinations as the situation evolves.