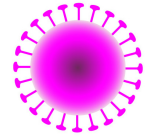




# NSTU Novel Corona Virus Update 1

Saturday, March 21, 2020



Dear NSTU Siblings,

So much has changed since we left for March break. A week ago, we knew something big was about to unfold. Today, the world as we know it is fundamentally different.

On Monday, March 23, our teaching lives will be different too.

## Critical Action: Self-Isolation

**If you have returned from any international destination at any point since March break started, you should be self-isolating for 14 straight days.**

If this applies to you, DO NOT GO TO WORK. You SHOULD identify that you are self-isolating as per public health advisories to your principal.

## What the Next Two Weeks Mean

For any teacher that has not travelled internationally and is not following mandatory self-isolation, I want to be clear that while schools are closed for the two weeks following March break, we are on duty and have a responsibility to be able to work from home as much as is reasonable.

I know that every member will demonstrate the impeccable professionalism we are known for and be ready to work in response to an approach. We are providing input to EECD on this approach. Details about how we will work collaboratively to support students will be shared later this week.

*Please bear in mind this situation is new for all of us. Please understand that the NSTU is working diligently to facilitate this difficult task for you.*

## What to Expect on Monday, March 23

**In terms of expectations for working on Monday, March 23, teachers will NOT be required to physically report to their school or site.**

You will receive communication from your principal at some point this weekend. That communication will include an invitation to make an appointment with your principal to:

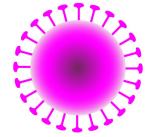
- go to school to collect belongings you think might be necessary to complete report cards that are in process (at your discretion, if applicable)
- go to school to collect belongings you think might be necessary to support students while working at home (at your discretion)
- bring home an RCE/CSAP owned device that you may need to check email and work from home on a go forward (at your discretion - if applicable)
- \*\*\*You should wash your hands before and after going to school if you collect items. Do not touch your face while you are at school.\*\*\*

We have a commitment that appointments will be organized to ensure teachers who do go to school to collect belongings can safely do so according to social distancing protocols.



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**If you have not travelled internationally over March Break, whether you make an appointment to go to school is up to you. Going to school is optional, not mandatory.**

## What You Are NOT Expected to Do:

- For those who were working on report cards prior to March break, these are NOT due on Monday. A date to submit reports will be determined and communicated sometime this week.
- Teachers will not be asked to be in classrooms to provide parents with access to collect student belongings. This will be coordinated between principals and parents able to make it to schools.
- Teachers will not be asked to package any belongings for students or parents. We know that COVID-19 can spread through touch.

Once the window to go to school by appointment has ended on Friday, March 27, schools will be sealed to everyone.

Closing schools down is a necessary step to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 via surface touching. The latest on the virus is that after two weeks, the virus dies on any surface. Whether schools are opened after two weeks of closure will be reassessed at a later time.

## Preparing to support students

At some point this week, your principal will likely ask you some logistical questions that will help your school plan, as a team, how you can collectively support your students. Those questions can reasonably include:

- Do you have high speed internet access at home?
- Can you get email at home?
- What type of device(s) do you have at home (PC? Mac? Chromebook? iPad? Android tablet?)
- Do you need a device to be able to work from home?
- If you need a device, are you more comfortable with a PC laptop, Mac Laptop, iPad or Chromebook? (this list will vary depending on devices available at your school)
- You can be asked to review and confirm/update a staff contact information sheet with a phone number you can be reached at while working from home

These questions are necessary for “inventory” for school-based leadership to get a clear picture of the resources staff have at home to build a plan to support students.

## The Way Forward: Collaborative Professionalism

We have no road map for the challenge before us. Neither does your principal. Neither do the senior leaders at RCEs & the CSAP. Neither does the leadership of the EECD or NSTU.

Every single human services system in Nova Scotia (healthcare, community services, corrections, etc.) is wrestling with how services can be delivered in ways that isolate and socially distance people to prevent the transmission and impact of COVID-19. This will require us all to change the way we work and to adopt a new spirit of collaboration.



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Leaders from the EECD, PSAANS and NSTU have met during March break. We will meet again on Monday. EECD will provide details through RCEs/CSAP and your principal about this approach once it finalizes things, likely on Monday afternoon or evening. We will support local presidents and members with advice when this approach is made public.

The intention is that next week will be for teachers and principals to create a plan together and prepare **together** to support students; teachers and school staff will work from home on a go forward basis.

**Please bear in mind that things are changing quickly, even hour to hour at this point. Even after an approach is announced, we will need to be flexible and open to alternate approaches as things evolve.**

## Supporting NSTU Members

It is essential that teachers get connected to official NSTU communication. If you do not have an NSTU webmail account or have not registered a non-employer email address to access NSTU memos and updates, you should do so by following the steps here:

<https://nstu.ca/the-nstu/communications/nstu-web-account>

The NSTU has established a corona virus page that lists all communications to members around this issue and provides links to support resources. Please consider this your go-to NSTU resource on COVID-19 related questions:

<https://nstu.ca/coronavirus>

Should you have any reason to contact your regional staff officer with questions or concerns, you can refer to this page to learn who to contact and how:

<https://nstu.ca/the-nstu/about-us/office-closure-information>

Finally, we are here for you. Local presidents, Regional Representative Chairpersons, Provincial Executive members and myself are all elected to represent and support you.

We welcome hearing from you and are committed to communicating and navigating these times together with you. In working with each other, we are best positioned to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Stay safe & healthy! In solidarity,

Paul Wozney  
President, Nova Scotia Teachers Union