

Schools and child-care centres close in light of COVID-19 on P.E.I. ^[1]

'If we make some good decisions now, it might help us in the weeks ahead'

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EXCERPTS

In a media briefing Sunday evening, P.E.I.'s Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Heather Morrison and Minister of Education Brad Trivers announced the closures of child-care centres and schools in response to COVID-19 on P.E.I.

While Island students are on March break beginning Monday, public schools across the Island will be closed for two weeks following March break, Morrison said.

For now, schools are set to re-open on April 6, Morrison said.

Child-care centres

Child-care centres will be closed beginning March 17, until further notice.

Effective immediately the Mark Arendz Provincial Ski Park at Brookvale and all provincial visitor information sites will also be closed.

"A week ago we may not have anticipated having to make that decision but I think it's the right decision at this time," Morrison said.

"These decisions are certainly not made lightly because they impact many people in our community and we're particularly concerned of course about child care for our essential services like health care workers," she said.

She said the province will continue to monitor the situation and reassess its action plan as it evolves.

School closures

Trivers said the province's intention is to ensure that Island children are able to complete the school year.

Trivers said numbers on the cost of the closure of child-care centres and schools can be expected in the coming days.

We are continuing to test many Islanders ... we have one case, certainly expecting more.— Dr. Heather Morrison, P.E.I.'s Chief Public Health Officer

He said he hopes to soon have federal emergency funding, to help offset the costs which will be incurred.

On Saturday afternoon, Morrison announced a Queens County woman who recently returned from travel on a cruise ship is the first confirmed case of COVID-19 on Prince Edward Island.

The woman is in her 50s and is in self-isolation. Morrison said the woman and her family are doing well.

Three new recommendations were made in a press briefing on Sunday afternoon, relating to the virus. They focused on long-term care and community care facilities, child-care facilities and essential health-care services.

"We are continuing to test many Islanders ... we have one case, certainly expecting more," Morrison said.

Understanding social distancing and self-isolation

Morrison emphasized the need for Islanders to understand what social distancing and self-isolation mean.

She said self-isolation is only recommended for those who have travelled outside of the country after March 8. Those who travelled prior to that date are still being asked to monitor for symptoms.

She said if people in self-isolation begin experiencing symptoms, those living with them should also self-isolate and monitor their

symptoms until test results are confirmed.

"If we make some good decisions now, it might help us in the weeks ahead," Morrison said.

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