



NOGDAWINDAMIN
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
Toll Free: 1 (800) 465 0999

Contact Kerry Francis
Telephone 1-800-465-0999
Fax 705-946-3717
Email Kfrancis@nog.ca
Website www.nog.ca

CHILD WELFARE COMMUNIQUE

March 16, 2020

For Immediate Release: Corona Virus (COVID-19) Service Impacts

Batchewana First Nation | Garden River First Nation | Thessalon First Nation | Mississauga First Nation | Serpent River First Nation | Sagamok Anishnawbek | Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, Ontario, March 16, 2020:

Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services (the child welfare authority for North Shore First Nations) is closely watching the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. In our response, we are following the advice of Public Health authorities.

The public health risk is continually reassessed as new information becomes available, and the agency will provide updates if the risk for COVID-19 changes. Currently, the health risk associated with COVID-19 is low for the general population of Canada. To minimize the potential spread of disease, all Nogdawindamin offices are now closed to public access and all cultural gatherings canceled until further notice. In addition:

- The agency will continue to respond to protection referrals to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children identified as being at risk. Increased emphasis will be placed on mitigating risk by providing appropriate resources and access to local services where possible.
- All service staff will be working from home and will be accessible through their normal contact numbers and office locations by calling their office extensions which will be forwarded to their cell phones. If you wish to reach staff, please call 1 (800) 465 0999 and enter their extension, dial by name or send them an email as they will be checking messages throughout the day.
- All regular follow-ups, appointments and service dates will be maintained through indirect contact. All families and children currently receiving services will be contacted to ensure alternative arrangements are in place to continue support via telecommunications solutions (FaceTime, Skype, telephone, etc) Staff will reach out directly to service users to coordinate appropriate service methods.
- Where direct family or child contact is required, all travel restrictions and protocols established by North Shore First Nations will be observed. Agency staff will be reaching out to each community to establish appropriate service delivery methods and protocols for maintaining essential services based on their emergency planning process and requirements.
- For Court-Ordered access visits, we are seeking clarification from the Courts as to compliance requirements and will be contacting each family directly to advise all impacted parties. Where access is required to be conducted, the access site will be sanitized in advance and screening will be conducted to minimize the possibility of disease transmission.
- We are consistently monitoring Public Health updates on COVID-19.

To assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19, please be advised that offices are accessible **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY** from March 16 – April 3, 2020. For updates on COVID-19, we encourage you to visit the following sites:

- **World Health Organization** (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>)
- **Public Health Agency of Canada** (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>)
- **Ontario Ministry of Health** (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USA)** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>)

For infection control information and resources, please visit the **Public Services Health and Safety Association** website at <https://www.pshsa.ca/other-topics/infection-prevention-control>

For further information please contact Kerry Francis, Executive Director at **1-800-465-0999** or email at kfrancis@nog.ca.