



Press Release: Nunavut Employees Union Applauds Decision to Shut Schools and Daycares as a COVID-19 Precaution

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 18, 2020 – Iqaluit, NU – The Nunavut Employees Union (NEU), which represents about 4,900 Territorial workers, applauds the recent Government of Nunavut (GN) decision to close schools and daycares throughout Nunavut in response to COVID-19 concerns.

“The GN made the right call when they put people’s health first and recommended proper precautions in light of the COVID-19 concerns,” says William (Bill) Fennell – NEU President referring to the GN’s March 16th announcement to close schools and daycares for a three-week period. “Until now, the daily lives of most people in Nunavut had not been impacted by this serious situation and people may have been tempted to feel a false sense of security. That is why the GN’s decision to put the health and potential safety of Nunavut’s children and those that work in the schools and daycares ahead of other considerations was the right thing to do for Nunavut.”

The NEU has already received numerous inquiries from impacted GN employees and will work throughout this crisis to ensure that Members are kept informed of changes that impact their workplaces and daily lives.

“The NEU understands that there may be other precautions and decisions that the GN will have to make as they continue to monitor and react to this changing and serious situation,” adds Fennell. “These decisions will impact people’s daily lives and work. We will continue to offer our support to our Members and ask our Members to look out for their neighbors and family who may be impacted by any shutdowns or interruptions to their jobs and workplaces.”

For now, the NEU Head Office in Iqaluit and the NEU’s Kivalliq Regional Office in Rankin Inlet will remain open.

“The thing about this crisis is that it is constantly changing, and like the GN, we have to take into account the general public health concerns as well as our staff,” says Brian Boutilier – NEU Executive Director. “That is why we are asking NEU Members to call or email us instead of dropping by our offices to speak to someone. The NEU’s support and availability to our Members will not change, we are just asking that Members follow the general precautions about close physical contact recommended by the Government.”

About the Nunavut Employees Union

The Nunavut Employees Union (NEU), a component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), represents more than 4,900 workers working for Nunavut and the diverse communities that make up the Territory. The NEU formally came into existence in 1998 just before the official birth of the great Territory of Nunavut in 1999. Its roots in working for those that make Nunavut work dates back well before that as does Nunavut’s true history. For more information, visit www.neu.ca.

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