



NOGDAWINDAMIN
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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CHILD WELFARE COMMUNIQUE

March 26, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: PANDEMIC SERVICE IMPACTS

Batchewana First Nation | Garden River First Nation | Thessalon First Nation | Mississauga First Nation
Serpent River First Nation | Sagamok Anishnawbek | Atikameksheng Anishnawbek

Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services (NFCS) in accordance with the agency's mandate, is continuing to work with all the North Shore First Nations to ensure our children, families, and staff are safe during this crisis. Along with the support of our community, we are taking proactive steps to limit and prevent the spread of COVID-19 with the safety of children and families as a top priority. The agency continues to gather and assess information from the Ontario Ministry of Health; Health Canada, Algoma Public Health and Public Health of Sudbury & Districts to implement precautionary measures listed below:

NFCS continues to respond to all child welfare matters including referrals and emergencies at 1 (800) 465-0999 and there will only be direct contact with families during investigations and high-risk child protection concerns with health screening tools in place to minimize risk. NFCS is communicating daily with the First Nations to stay current on any specific changes to service delivery and child welfare issues during the pandemic.

All front-line service staff are working remotely in direct response to directives to ensure social distancing and reduce the risk of transmitting the virus. All group programs, cultural gatherings, and training events are cancelled indefinitely.

All services teams have implemented strategies to ensure families, including our youth, are supported. Methods of communication include; email, FaceTime, texts, phone calls, and Skype. 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 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. Agency staff are providing families and youth with the information required to maintain safety.

Mental Health support is provided by calling the main agency number at 1 (800) 465-0999. While walk-in clinics and face-to-face crisis supports are suspended, our Children, Youth, and Adult Mental Health Services remain available. Staff is available to provide support during the crisis daily from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

We remain ready to help our families. The Agency wishes to remind all North Shore First Nation Families and Youth to contact us immediately if you are experiencing hardship during this pandemic due to social distancing, food security, lack of communications or basic necessities of life. We remain focused on strengthening families, ensuring the safety and protection of children and youth, and working inclusively with openness and respect with those at increased risk in our communities. We encourage all families to continue to follow instructions provided by community leadership and to keep informed through credible official sources. Be aware of local updates through your community web sites, door-to-door resource deliveries happening in the communities, and via community social media pages. For additional information on pandemic status including information about where to go for information, who to call and what to do if feeling unwell please visit the following links:

1. **World Health Organization**
(<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>)
2. **Public Health Agency of Canada**
(<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirusinfection.html>)
3. **Ontario Ministry of Health**
(<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>)
4. **Algoma Public Health**
(<http://www.algomapublichealth.com/disease-and-illness/infectious-diseases/novel-coronavirus/>)
5. **Public Health Sudbury & Districts**
(<https://www.phsd.ca/health-topics-programs/diseases-infections/coronavirus>)

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

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