



Superintendent of Schools
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Mr. Stefan Czaporowski
Superintendent of Schools

March 10, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

As many of you are aware, there is a heightened focus on the "Coronavirus", which has been officially named by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as COVID-19 (Coronavirus Infections Disease identified in 2019). At this time, the potential for possible exposure in our district is low. We have received guidance from the our local Health Department, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure that we are ready in the event that this pandemic becomes more widespread in the Commonwealth.

As with any infectious disease, the old adage "*an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure*" will apply. The best preventative precautions that can be implemented include:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing with a tissue or elbow; never use your hands.
- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect hard surfaces and regularly "touched" surfaces such as door handles and railings.
- Use cleaning products that contain the appropriate concentrations of disinfectant for disease prevention.

The symptoms of COVID-19 mimic the flu and other viruses. Symptoms for COVID-19 include: fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Other symptoms include: chills, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, abdominal pain, vomiting, and diarrhea. The CDC is recommending that you monitor your health for at least 14 days after a possible exposure and call your health care provider.

Additionally, we want to share the following information:

Ongoing coordination with the City of Westfield's Health Department

The City of Westfield's Health Department remains the primary point of contact for any communicable disease outbreaks. Their work is informed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). We will continue to follow their direction and guidance.

Plan for cleaning buildings and buses

The Maintenance Department has been and will continue to sanitize and disinfect our schools daily. Also, school buses are cleaned on a daily basis.

Field Trips

All international trips have been cancelled for Spring/Summer 2020 as recommended by state and federal agencies. Local and out-of-state trips will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Any questions regarding trip cancellations should be directed to the building Principal.

Confidentiality

As with any medical information, confidentiality about our staff, students, and families must be maintained at all times according to federal regulations. Information about reasons for absences, travel history and illness cannot be given out and must be protected.

Moving Forward

We will continue to monitor illness in all of our schools. Anyone who is ill should remain home. We ask that you please consult with your primary care physician if you have any questions or concerns about sending your child to school.

Anytime there is an outbreak of a virus or illness, it can be very unsettling for families and staff. Keeping everyone informed, safe and healthy remains our priority. For more information, please visit the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website. Residents may also contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health 24-hour emergency hotline at 617-983-6800.

Sincerely,



Stefan Czapowski
Superintendent of Schools

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