March 5, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian, Faculty/Staff, and School Community Members:

The Coronavirus has been a major topic in the national news. Now that there has been a confirmed diagnosis within New York State, we believe it is necessary to share information with you about what we know and what we are doing in our District to ensure the health and safety of our students.

We wish to reiterate the importance of good hygiene habits to help prevent the spread of contagious health conditions. Health officials agree that one of the best ways to prevent contagious conditions is proper, complete, and frequent hand washing, which we emphasize with our students and staff. Good practices also include covering coughs with the elbow and minimizing contact with others if one is ill. We ask that you please share and follow this important information with your children.

Current health care procedures when your child is ill with the flu or other illness are to see a health care provider and keep your student home from school. We recommend that your student stay home until the fever is below 100 degrees without medication and vomiting has stopped for at least 24 hours. To be cautious, we suggest and urge that this time be extended to 48-72 hours after the fever is below 100 degrees without medication and vomiting has stopped, or a doctor has cleared the student to return to school. We understand that we have individuals and families that must travel to impacted countries for work or other reasons. We would ask that those families please be very vigilant in monitoring health conditions and self-quarantining their immediate families in accordance with published guidelines to assist us as we work to keep all as safe as possible during this uncertain time.

In regards to student travel, per the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Education Department, all student health is confidential and may only be shared in accordance with FERPA. Students should not be excluded from school or any school activities based on race, country of origin, or recent travel.
We encourage you to follow the procedures below at home:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, for at least 20 seconds, if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. If you use a tissue, throw it in the trash.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

The district continues to follow health care procedures and cleaning protocols in our schools. We are doing our best to keep up to date on the latest information, and we will continue to follow guidelines from our state and federal agencies.

Our children’s safety is a priority. Be assured that all of our cleaning staff is cleaning and disinfecting the school buildings and contact surfaces to the best of our abilities. Our cleaners have appropriate disinfecting and cleaning agents to use when cleaning our schools. They are vigilant when cleaning, especially contact surfaces such as doorknobs, desks, counters, etc.

The following pages include information directly from the New York State Education Department. For additional information, please go to the below link:


Sincerely,

Michael A. Mead
Superintendent of Schools

From State Education Department:

A new coronavirus called 2019 Novel (new) Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was first found in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. This virus had not been found in humans before. This coronavirus can lead to fever, cough and trouble breathing or shortness of breath. There are thousands of diagnosed cases in China and new cases being diagnosed in a number of countries including the United States.

What do we know?

Since this virus is very new, health authorities continue to carefully watch how this virus spreads. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working hard to learn as much as possible about this new virus, so that we can better understand how it spreads and causes illness. The CDC considers this virus to be a serious public health
concern. Based on current information the CDC recommends avoiding travel to China. Updated travel information related to 2019-nCoV can be found at: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/novel-coronavirus-china

How Does 2019 Novel (New) Coronavirus Spread?

Health experts believe the virus probably spreads from animals to humans and from person to person. It’s not clear yet how easily the virus spreads from person-to-person.

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is not currently a concern for the general public and is not actively circulating among New Yorkers at this time. Therefore, there is no need to cancel school or social events, and there is no need for students or school staff to wear surgical masks at school.

Symptoms

Information to date suggests that 2019-nCoV causes mild-to-moderate illness and symptoms like the flu, including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

Are visitors from China being screened?

Yes, as of February 2, 2020 new screening protocols are conducted for individuals entering the US from China at designated airports.

PreK-12 schools may have students who attend school and have traveled to various areas in Asia, including China. Students should not be excluded from school or any school activities based on race, country of origin, or recent travel (or a family member’s recent travel), including to any part of China. Schools may only exclude a student if a local health department informs the school that a student must comply with a quarantine order or the student is symptomatic of a communicable or infectious disease pursuant to Education Law §906.

This is an emerging and rapidly changing situation. For questions please contact your local department of health or the NYS DOH Novel Coronavirus hotline at: 1-888-364-3065.

We encourage you to keep up to date about 2019-nCoV, its treatment and prevention, by visiting the following websites:

Additional Resources:

- CDC’s dedicated 2019-nCoV website at: https://www.cdc.gov/nCoV
- NYSDOH’s dedicated 2019-nCoV website at: https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/NYSDOH
- Directory of local health departments: https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information
- New York State Center for School Health website at: www.schoolhealthny.com
- https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html

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