

February 27, 2020

Dear School Community:

With the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) updated recommendations, the Board of Health, School Nurse Leader, and the school department are working closely to monitor our students' health and ensure we are following all health guidelines and recommendations. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has shared guidance for school administrators and school health personnel regarding the Coronavirus, known as COVID-19. While this is a public health concern, the CDC continues to report that the immediate risk to the general public remains low at this time. It is important to be reminded that the risk for the influenza virus is very high and that residents are much more likely to become sick with a cold or the flu than to be exposed to COVID-19.

As you may recall, years ago we dealt with the H1N1 and Noroviruses in a similar situation. The protocols we used to address these concerns are ready at hand. Again, Walpole Public School District is in constant communication with the Walpole Board of Health and Massachusetts DPH, and we are following recommendations from both the DPH and the CDC. Over the break, the schools were cleaned with particular attention to touchpoints and high contact surfaces. Surfaces will continue to be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis. As with the seasonal flu, there are general precautions we can all take:

- Practice good hand hygiene. Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Use Alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- When coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. You can also cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid sharing drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, dishes, towels or other items. Wash these items thoroughly with soap and water after use.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- It is important to keep children home from school when they are ill. Please see this [link](#) for guidance.

Additionally, the following websites provide additional information about the Coronavirus:

- For up-to-date information, visit the DPH COVID-19 web site at www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus
- More detailed information and additional guidance is available from the CDC at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov
- A fact sheet is available in many languages to assist you in learning about this virus:
<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19#-printable-fact-sheets->

We remain deeply committed to student and staff wellness and will continue to share new information with you, as necessary, about this evolving situation.

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