



Franklin Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent
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March 23, 2020

Dear Franklin Families and Faculty/Staff

We recognize that this is a very difficult time in all of our lives. We are concerned about the health and well-being of our students, our families, and our community in light of the novel Coronavirus. We are also adjusting to a dramatic change in our daily lives in an effort to curb its spread. The measures we are taking, including the dramatic act of closing schools and businesses, for **social distancing** will only have the intended effect if they are followed diligently. We urge all families in Franklin to stay at home and limit unnecessary travel and activities.

As mentioned in the Friday message from our schools, we are here to support each other. At the end of this memo, I share a resource for families that you might find helpful in thinking about and providing for your own “self-care”, and that of your family, during this difficult time.

Stay At Home Advisory

Governor Baker, earlier today, issued an Executive Order that all non-essential businesses will close as of noon Tuesday, March 24, and for the MDPH to issue a stay-at-home advisory for two weeks (until April 7). Residents are advised to stay home and avoid unnecessary travel and other unnecessary activities during this two-week time period. The Baker-Polito Administration Order also limits gatherings to 10 people during the state of emergency, a reduction from the 25 person limit established in an earlier order. More information can be found on the www.mass.gov website:

<https://www.mass.gov/news/governor-charlie-baker-orders-all-non-essential-businesses-to-cess-in-person-operation>

Closure of Schools AND School Grounds

This serves as a reminder that our schools and grounds are closed and off-limits until April 7 in an effort to emphasize that we need to limit locations for people to congregate in order to protect the well-being of our community through social distancing. Police will be monitoring the buildings and grounds.

First Case Reported in Franklin

The Board of Health issued a memo over the weekend to share the news that the Town of Franklin has its first confirmed case of Coronavirus. We have no additional information to share but provide you with this link to the release:

https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/franklinma/files/uploads/2020-03-22_coronavirus_pos_case_release_1.pdf

Food Service and Weekend Backpacks

Our Food Service Department is providing breakfast and lunch in a “Grab and Go” fashion in the loop behind Franklin High School. We have **expanded our hours** from 11 AM to 1 PM. These meals are available to any child in Franklin who needs breakfast or lunch, not solely those who have qualified for Federal free and reduced lunch. We would like to assure our families that we are not at risk of running out of food. If transportation is a concern for you, please e-mail Director of Student Services, Paula Marano (maranop@franklinps.net) so that we can coordinate a drop-off.

The Franklin Food Pantry, in collaboration with FPS, provides Weekend Backpacks during the school year to families who are food insecure. We will continue to distribute backpacks on Fridays, using the same pick up area as the lunch/breakfast program. If you would like a backpack, please e-mail Director of Student Services, Paula Marano (maranop@franklinps.net). If transportation is a concern for you, please let us know to arrange for delivery.

Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

We want to take this moment to remind our school community of our core values of Social- Emotional Development, Safe and Inclusive School Culture, High Expectations for Student Success, and a Collaborative Community. In all that we do, we seek to align our behavior to each one of these values.

Unfortunately, something like the Coronavirus crisis can lead to hateful, biased, and discriminatory actions based on stereotypes, race, and country of origin. While we are not aware of any specific incident in Franklin, we are sensitive to and aware of the possibility. We share the following resources with faculty/staff and families in order to broaden the awareness:

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/speaking-up-against-racism-around-the-new-coronavirus>

<https://www.adl.org/blog/the-coronavirus-surfaces-fear-stereotypes-and-scapegoating>

Enrichment Opportunities and Home Resources

The Franklin Public Schools is currently engaging in providing social-emotional support and connections where educators across the district are engaging with students in a virtual environment. Additionally, in alignment with current state guidance on learning experiences, FPS educators are providing enrichment and extension opportunities to “Keep the Learning Alive”. We are remaining informed of both state and federal guidance. We anticipate receiving further guidance from DESE this week, which will help inform future actions. In the meantime, the following district-based resources can be a support for you and your family:

- [FPS Learning](#)
- [DESE Educational Resources](#)
- [WGBH Distance Learning Center](#)
- [William James Project Interface](#) - A counseling referral service that is available to any Franklin resident, including school children and families

MCAS Testing

DESE has officially postponed the Grade 10 English language arts assessment and has shifted the testing window for Grades 3-8 ELA assessment window, originally scheduled to open March 30. MCAS-Alt portfolios are not due April 3. More decisions may be forthcoming from DESE about the MCAS assessments, but these require legislative relief. We will continue to keep you informed.

A Resource to Help Parents/Families

The following link will bring you to a resource from Maria Trozzi, educator, author and consultant, on talking to kids about Coronavirus and ways in which to care for them and yourself:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Nhea2pFrLbmZKEvYlMKKqnDotWZoUW6d/view?usp=sharing>

For More Information on Matters Related to Coronavirus

We have reorganized our webpage so that you can more easily find our Coronavirus resources:

<https://www.franklinps.net/district/urgent-alerts/updates-fps-covid-19-closure-information-portal>

Sincerely,

Sara E. Ahern

Superintendent of Schools