



Franklin Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent
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February 28, 2020

Dear Franklin Families and Faculty/Staff,

We are aware that many families and staff members have concerns and questions related to the news of the recent outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and how it may impact our local schools and community. As a district, we are remaining informed of the health advisories being issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and other agencies. For your reference, you may wish to view the following links, which are providing regular updates and recommendations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19#-printable-fact-sheets->

While this is a public health concern, the CDC and MA DPH continue to report that the immediate risk to the general public remains low at this time. As with seasonal cold and flu infections, we are being advised to reinforce general precautions we all should take to remain healthy:

- 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.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick whenever possible.
- Practice other good health habits: Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Please keep children home from school when they are ill. If your child has any of the following symptoms please keep them home from school: temperature greater than 100, coughing, vomiting,

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diarrhea, any rash not yet diagnosed by a physician, red or pink itchy eye, and/or drainage from eye, and any contagious illness such as chicken pox, strep throat or flu. We also ask that staff stay home when they are ill in order to prevent the spread of infections.

School staff are responding according to agency guidance. Nursing staff are monitoring illness within the student body and are prepared to react appropriately, according to MA DPH guidance, if concerned that a student may be infected with the Coronavirus. Our School Facilities Department spent extra time over February break to deeply clean our schools, as we typically do during the cold and flu season. They will continue to be vigilant about cleaning frequently touched surfaces. Additionally, public health officials are not recommending the use of masks or gloves in public settings.

At this time, federal health authorities are not recommending that schools cancel classes. Should school closure or dismissal become necessary, we would follow the same procedures for our cancellation practices due to inclement weather, which can be found here:

https://www.franklinps.net/sites/franklinmaps/files/uploads/inclement_weather_information.pdf

The Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is an evolving situation that we are following closely. We are following all recommended guidelines to ensure the safety of our students and staff, as we are deeply committed to the well-being of our students and staff.

Sincerely,

Sara E. Ahern, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools