



Franklin Public Schools

*Office of the Superintendent
355 East Central Street; Suite 3
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038
Phone: 508-553-4819*

March 8, 2020

Dear Franklin Families and Faculty/Staff,

I am writing with a follow-up communication to the [February 28, 2020 letter](#) to the community. As a district, we continue to remain informed of the health advisories being issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and other agencies. We also continue to communicate internally among administrators, teachers, our local Health Department, School Nurse Leader, and consulting School Physician. Nursing staff are monitoring illness within the student body and are prepared to react appropriately. Our response continues to align with agency guidance.

MDPH continues to communicate that the immediate risk to the general public remains low. The Town of Franklin has developed a Coronavirus portal, where the public can access the latest information: <https://www.franklinma.gov/health-department/urgent-alerts/corona-virus-information-portal>

We continue to remain vigilant about keeping a clean school environment. Our custodians are engaged in the regular cleaning of schools, as they routinely do during cold and flu season. They have also augmented this regular cleaning with additional cleaning and sanitization of hard surfaces. They have also made sure that the hand-sanitizing stations, located across all schools, are full and operable. We continue to reinforce that ill students and staff should remain at home.

We learned over the weekend that two staff members, who are asymptomatic, have been asked to self-quarantine after having attended a function with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. One staff member works at Horace Mann Middle School and one is a substitute who was assigned to Annie Sullivan Middle School. We have sought guidance from MDPH on this matter and are assured that we do not need to take additional steps at this time. Out of an abundance of caution, custodial staff were called in on Sunday to conduct an extra round of cleaning and sanitization of both Horace Mann Middle School and Annie Sullivan Middle School, as well as the common spaces shared with Oak St. Elementary and Keller Elementary schools.

Earlier in the week, Governor Baker urged schools to cancel international spring field trips. Franklin does not currently have an overseas trip planned for the spring; however, we have a trip to Switzerland and Germany planned for the summer. At this time, we have not cancelled travel plans but are remaining informed of cancellation guidance about summer international travel, as well as local, regional, and national travel. We are also remaining informed about any guidance that is issued related to large gatherings.

Undoubtedly, children are hearing a lot about the Coronavirus. This resource may be of assistance to you in addressing questions they may ask:

<https://www.open-circle.org/what-s-new/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-coronavirus>

As a reminder, here are some 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.

Again, 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, 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.

The Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) continues to be an evolving situation that we are following closely. We will keep you informed with updates and information that become available to us. We continue to seek out information, sharing it as appropriate, and following all recommended guidelines to ensure the safety of our students and staff, as we are deeply committed to their well-being.

Sincerely,

Sara E. Ahern, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools