March 2, 2020

Dear Norfolk Families,

We understand that many of our families and community members are concerned about the evolving situation with the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in the United States and in our region. We wanted to provide you with an update and assure you that we are monitoring the situation closely and are in regular communication with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. We are following their guidance and recommendations for cleaning and sanitizing public spaces, as well as for controlling and preventing the spread of disease.

As of right now, there are no confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Wrentham, Plainville or Norfolk.

At this time, the district would like to remind families that have recently travelled out of the country to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and policies and stay up-to-date on the information being released. If you or a family member is showing signs of fever or flu, you should contact your local physician or healthcare provider immediately. Parents should know that any student placed under quarantine or self-quarantine will be given an excused absence from school. School officials recommend that parents notify the district if your child is placed under quarantine so that we can develop an educational plan and provide work for your child during their absence.

We would like to remind parents that it is important to 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, chills, headache, sore throat, runny nose, persistent cough, vomiting, diarrhea, and any contagious illness such as chicken pox, strep throat or flu. Students need to remain home until they are fever free for a minimum of 24 hours without medication.

As of March 2, coronavirus has infected people in 74 countries including the United States. Currently, the risk to the general public remains very low, with the incidence rate significantly lower than the incidence rate of the seasonal flu. Coronavirus can range from producing mild or no symptoms in some individuals to a serious, potentially deadly infection in others. The severity of the illness appears to vary by both general health condition and age of the individuals infected, with elders being more significantly impacted than youth.

Symptoms of coronavirus include fever, cough, shortness of breath and respiratory illness including pneumonia in severe cases. If you suspect that you are ill with a respiratory disease, or have been informed that you have been exposed to COVID-19, contact your Primary Care Provider immediately.
In an effort to prevent the spread of flu, colds and other respiratory illnesses, the Norfolk Board of Health recommends the following measures:

- Practice good hand hygiene! Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds including under your fingernails. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol content) can be used when soap and water are not available.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing with a tissue and discard it immediately. Cough into the sleeve over your elbow instead of your hand. Wash your hands often when coughing and sneezing.
- Do not share drinking glasses, straws, cups, utensils, dishes, facecloths, towels or other similar items. Wash these items thoroughly with soap and water after use.
- Avoid close contact with others who are sick whenever possible. Please remember that it is possible to be a “carrier” of a virus and not be ill. It is advisable to avoid as much direct physical contact with others while there is any type of an outbreak.
- Stay home when you are sick
- Practice other good health habits: Clean and disinfect 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.

Norfolk custodial staff members have received training on proper methods for cleaning and sanitizing facilities to prevent the spread of infectious disease. Our Facilities Department is vigilantly sanitizing our educational spaces as we typically do during cold and flu season and ensuring that our school environments are as clean and healthy as possible.


Additionally, the CDC provides up-to-date information on its website:

We will keep you informed of changes or updates with regard to Coronavirus, as we are directed and advised by state and local public health departments.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ingrid N. Allardi
Superintendent, Norfolk Public Schools

Blythe C. Robinson
Norfolk Town Administrator
Sincerely,

Ingrid N. Allardi
Superintendent of Schools
Norfolk, MA
Norfolk Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, or homelessness