February 28, 2020

Dear Taunton Families,

We understand that many families have questions regarding the recent outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and how it may impact our local community. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is providing daily updates and recommendations. The most up-to-date information can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

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. Yet, in today’s connected world, with a large number of district families traveling during school vacation weeks, the potential for infectious disease is always of concern. As with seasonal flu and other contagious illnesses, there are general precautions we can all take to remain as healthy as possible.

- 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.

It is important to keep children home from school if they have any of the following symptoms or health issues:

- temperature greater than 100 degrees (student may return to school when fever-free for 24 hours, without use of fever reducing medication);
- serious frequent or prolonged coughing;
- unexplained vomiting, or diarrhea (student may return 24 hours after last episode);
- any new unexplained rash or red/pink itchy eye with drainage not yet diagnosed by a physician;
- any contagious illness such as chicken pox, strep throat or flu.

If you have further concerns please contact your child’s health care provider or school nurse.

The Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is an evolving situation that we are following closely and will continue to update you as information is shared with us. Please rest assured that we are monitoring student health concerns. We are in close communication with the local Board of Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health/School Health Unit, as well as pediatric health care providers in the community. Governor Baker will announce the State’s Coronavirus plan next week. Our School Facilities Department is vigilantly sanitizing our educational spaces as we typically do during cold and flu season. We are following all recommended guidelines to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

We remain deeply committed to student and staff wellness and will continue to share new information with you as it becomes available.

Respectfully,

John J. Cabral

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