



HERRICKS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent

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**Education Today
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Dear Members of the Herricks School Community,

We continue to closely follow the latest developments regarding the Novel Coronavirus, and I am writing to provide an update and share some additional resources. As you know, we have been working closely with health officials from the Nassau County and New York State Departments of Health. Our public health officials continue to provide reassuring news that the risk of contracting the virus in New York State and Nassau County remain low. We will stay in frequent contact with these agencies and will comply with any updated guidance provided. An important point to remember is that the medical experts have stated that approximately 80% of the cases of Coronavirus are mild and self-resolve. The 20% of cases that may result in hospitalization are individuals who are elderly or have pre-existing medical conditions. Yesterday, we received additional guidance from the NYS Education Department and the NYS Department of Health. This guidance includes the following measures that will be taken to stop the spread of illness:

- If there is a confirmed COVID-19 case related to a school (student or staff member), the school will be contacted by the State or Nassau County Health Department. The District would then communicate this information to all parents and staff members. By law, the identity of the specific individual will remain confidential. The Department of Health will do a thorough investigation and will contact any individuals who may have been in close contact with the person for follow-up.
- When a student or staff member attended school prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case, New York State Department of Health requires an initial 24-hour school closure, in order to begin an investigation to determine the contacts that the individual may have had within the school environment. This investigation will inform the plan determined by the department of health as to any further required closure, or other necessary precautions to take for specific classrooms, or for specific individuals. The district will follow the plan, as directed by the Department of Health. During that initial 24-hour closure the school district will immediately take steps to clean and disinfect the school building(s) where the student or staff member had contact prior to testing positive for COVID-19. That disinfection will be in accordance with NYS DOH guidelines and will be completed before accepting returning students when school re-opens.
- Travel-related recommendations for schools: NYS DOH currently recommends suspending school sponsored travel programs for all students and staff in currently impacted countries (China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea). The Herricks School District has no field trips or travel scheduled to any areas outside the United States. Individual students and families returning from currently impacted countries will be required to be under precautionary quarantine for 14 days upon return by the CDC.
- At this time, most people in the United States have little immediate risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. However, some people are worried about the disease. Fear and anxiety can lead to social stigma towards certain ethnic or religious groups or persons based on recent travel. Stigma and discrimination can occur when people associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is specifically at risk for the disease. Stigma hurts everyone by creating more fear or anger towards ordinary people instead of the disease that is causing the problem. We can fight stigma and help others by providing social support

and understanding the virus. Our mental health professionals are always available to provide support to students who are experiencing stress and anxiety.

While there is no indication at this point that closing schools for an extended period of time will happen in our region, we are developing plans to communicate with families and educate students in the event that schools are closed for an extended period. While a full educational experience would be difficult to provide through remote technology, we will endeavor to offer continuity of instruction to the extent possible, if this should occur. More information about these plans will be communicated to families.

The Department of Health continues to stress the importance of preventative measures. Be assured that our facilities team is working diligently to clean and disinfect all common surfaces, such as desks, tables, seats and door knobs, and school buses on a daily basis. In addition, there are hand sanitizers available in every classroom in the district. I urge you to continue to remind your children of the preventative measures during flu season, which include:

- Frequent handwashing
- Staying at home and making an appointment with your physician when sick
- Covering your cough and sneeze
- Avoid touching your face, mouth and eyes

Unfortunately, there is much misinformation and some hurtful rumors circulating on the Internet. There is a commercial for a hospital that you may have seen that includes the motto “more science, less fear”. I believe this phrase is relevant to a healthy approach to dealing with the Novel Coronavirus. It is important at this time to be mindful of the facts and methods of prevention. We have posted resources on the [Health and Safety](#) page of our district website. These include the following:

[Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)
[NYS Department of Health Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
[Nassau County Health Department](#)

New York State has also created a **Coronavirus Hotline**: 888-364-3065.

As always, the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff remain the District's first priority. Rest assured that we will continue to follow the directions we receive from state and local health authorities regarding the Novel Coronavirus, and will take the preventative measures outlined above for the safety of our school community. I will continue to keep you updated on any new information as we receive it. Thank you for your cooperation.

Regards,

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