

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you have probably seen in news reports, the U.S. Department of Health and the CDC are closely monitoring an emerging global health concern, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, or 2019-n-CoV. This is a new strain of Coronavirus, first detected in Wuhan, China. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that may cause respiratory illness in some people. As of February 3, 2020, eleven cases of 2019-n-CoV have been identified across the entire United States. There is one confirmed case of the virus in Massachusetts. This patient is a college student who recently returned to Boston after travelling to China. He is quarantined at home and is recovering well.

We recognize that families may have some anxiety about the situation and questions about the precautions being taken to safeguard our students. We want you to know that we understand the concerns and we take the matter seriously. We have several preventative measures in place to keep our students and staff safe and healthy, including the following;

- ❖ Our School Nurses regularly monitor absences and conduct infectious disease surveillance. We ask families to call their child's school nurse to report any flu or viral illness so that we can immediately identify patterns in our school buildings.
- ❖ Our custodial staff thoroughly cleans our buildings everyday and routinely disinfects classrooms.
- ❖ We want to reassure you that the Norwood Public Schools are working closely with the Norwood Board of Health, who in turn are carefully monitoring emerging information from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC). We are staying well informed regarding this situation and will share pertinent recommendations with you immediately. You are welcome to call your child's school nurse with any questions.

At this time, there is no need for students to stay home from school or wear masks at school. Families can take steps to prevent many viral illnesses by;

- ✓ Getting a Flu Shot if you have not already done so.
- ✓ Reminding children to continue good hand washing practices at home and at school. This is the single most effective way for all of us to stay healthy!
- ✓ Teaching children to cover coughs and sneezes with their elbow, and avoid touching the eyes, nose, or mouth to lessen the spread of infection.
- ✓ Washing hands or using hand sanitizer after being out in public places.
- ✓ Staying home from work or school if you have symptoms of a viral illness, such as a fever above 100 degrees, cough, runny nose, chills, or body aches.
- ✓ Remaining home after an illness develops until you have been symptom free and fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Ibuprofen/Motrin.

We are closely monitoring the emerging global health concerns, and want you to know that there is no public health threat in Norwood at this time. We promise to keep you updated as the situation develops.

Sincerely,

Jill Driscoll, MEd BSN RN NCSN
Nurse Leader
Norwood Public Schools