



NORWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Nurse Leader

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

I have had the pleasure of speaking with many parents and staff since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) has become present in Norwood and across the Commonwealth. I thought it would be helpful to share some common concerns and the School District's response.

❖ "I don't want to send my child to school for fear of them getting COVID-19"

As in previous letters, our custodial staff thoroughly cleans our buildings everyday paying careful attention to hard surfaces and frequently touched surfaces (door handles, faucets, railings), bathrooms and health rooms. School classrooms, hallways and common rooms are spray disinfected on a rotating schedule so that all areas are treated a couple of times each week. This past weekend all buildings received an extra cleaning and windows were opened to facilitate the exchange of fresh air.

School nurses are continuing to monitor absences. Students who might not be feeling well are sent to the health office, evaluated by the nurse and parents are called if there are any concerns. School nurses are reinforcing proper handwashing and cough etiquette with the students and staff. The nurses continue to work closely with the Norwood Health Department and Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to ensure that Norwood Public Schools is following all recommended guidelines. Should there need to be a change in our school operations the school administration and the Health Department will coordinate with the Superintendent's office to notify families and staff immediately.

❖ "I understand there are people who have tested positive for Coronavirus in Norwood"

There have been two presumptive cases in Norwood. A presumptive case means they tested positive at the MA state lab and the samples are sent to the CDC for confirmation, but a presumptive case is considered a case in MA. When a presumptive case is identified, the Norwood Health Department is notified by the State and begins the very thorough and labor-intensive process of investigating the exposure and possible close contacts. The Health Department calls those people who have tested positive and interviews them about where they have been, who they have been with and for what length of time. A person who meets the criteria as a close contact will be notified by the Health Department and asked to self-quarantine for 14 days.

Every Town has a Health Department and during communicable disease outbreaks, they share information. If a person tests positive for COVID-19 even if they live, work or have visited different Towns the Health Department will identify and notify all contacts.

It is important to understand that who is sick or quarantined is people's personal business and is not for public knowledge. It is also important to understand that Health Department professionals or a physician evaluate who meets the criteria for both testing and self-

quarantine; referring yourself or your child for testing can be disruptive to the usually smooth public health process.

- ❖ “I don’t understand why the families of people who are quarantined are not quarantined as well”

COVID-19 is similar to other coronaviruses. In order for COVID-19 to spread, an infected person must be sick and cough or sneeze respiratory droplets into the air or onto surfaces. Healthy people nearby can breathe in the droplets or pick them up on their hands and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth and catch the virus. People who are determined to be a close contact of a presumptive COVID-19 case are asked to self-quarantine. These individuals are not sick, but are asked to separate from others as a protective measure for the rest of the community. If a self-quarantined person becomes sick, they are tested and if positive, the whole investigation process begins again and will include their family members.

- ❖ “I care for an elderly or ill parent, an infant, or I myself have health issues. I am worried, what should I do?”

All precautions that are usually taken to prevent catching the flu are also helpful to avoid catching COVID-19:

- ✓ Getting a Flu Shot if you have not already done so.
- ✓ Continue good hand washing practices at home and at school. **This is the single most effective way for all of us to stay healthy!**
- ✓ Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow, and avoid touching the eyes, nose, or mouth to lessen the spread of infection.
- ✓ Avoid stores, events, or gatherings where there are lots of people in a confined space.
- ✓ Wash hands, use hand sanitizer and change clothes after being out in public places.
- ✓ Stay 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. We encourage anyone experiencing these symptoms, especially the elderly or those with underlying health concerns, to promptly consult a doctor and disclose any recent travel/connection to Norwood. Then follow your doctor’s recommendations.
- ✓ Remain 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.

News media reports and social media postings are escalating and are more anxiety provoking than enlightening. There is still no need for students or staff to stay home from or wear masks at school. Please seek reputable information on COVID-19 from your own healthcare provider, from the Norwood Health Department [http://www.norwoodma.gov/departments/health/coronavirus_\(covid-19\).php](http://www.norwoodma.gov/departments/health/coronavirus_(covid-19).php) or from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health site www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus. In addition, please don’t hesitate to contact myself or your student’s school nurse with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Jill Driscoll, RN