March 1, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We understand that the novel coronavirus, now known as COVID-19, is causing concern in our community, country, and the world. This letter is to provide you with information and to inform you of some of the steps RSU 1 is taking, or preparing to take, in the event of a coronavirus outbreak in our community. The district is monitoring the situation and following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Maine Department of Education.

What Is Known

- The virus causing COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified which causes a respiratory illness ranging from mild cold-like symptoms to severe pneumonia.
- There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19 but the National Institutes of Health is evaluating treatments and developing a vaccine already.
- Currently, there is no confirmed community spread of COVID-19 in Maine, meaning the virus is not being spread from person-to-person. However, experts predict that there will eventually be community spread.

How The Virus Spreads

- COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads-through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.

What You Can Do Now

- Keep children home when they are sick.
- Teach children to always cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Remind them to wash their hands on a regular basis.
- Tell children to avoid touching their mouth and nose since that is how germs get into the body.

What RSU 1 Is Doing

The district is being vigilant about disinfecting commonly touched surfaces throughout the schools on a daily basis. We are also consulting with medical professionals and emergency personnel to determine other steps we may take to assist in stopping this disease before an outbreak occurs.

Our schools are prepared to alter our procedures and planning should the situation change. We have been discussing out of state/country trips that are planned for this spring. The decision to close a school will likely be made for us by the Maine CDC. If schools are closed, we will explore options such as remote learning opportunities and extended day make-up time. We will continue to monitor new developments related to the coronavirus and reevaluate our steps and actions daily.
The district will continue to share information as it becomes available. Please know that, as always, the health and safety of our students and staff is our highest priority. Below are some additional resources that we thought you might find helpful.

Sincerely,

Patrick Manuel
Superintendent of Schools

[Links to CDC resources]

CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Information Site
Prevention & Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)