

March 11, 2020

Dear Parents, Families, and Staff,

As cases of COVID 19 rise in the United States, we continue to receive updated information and guidance from the Maine Department of Education and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC is studying how this virus spreads. It is thought, at this point, to be spread much like the flu through droplets carried in the air from coughs and sneezes. This is a rapidly changing situation, and one which we are monitoring closely on a daily basis.

We encourage you to stay informed of the situation by regularly checking updates from the [CDC](#). In the meantime, our focus continues to be on prevention and preparation. We are watching for symptoms and will provide guidance to families and staff as it becomes available. We are involved in weekly calls with the [Maine Department of Education](#) and [Maine CDC](#). We continue to consult with Dr. Amina Hanna, our School Physician, other community emergency resources (fire, police), and the administration of RSU 1. In addition to staying informed, the district has also put in place some additional daily disinfecting practices (with a CDC-approved cleaner) and additional custodial staff to ensure high-touch surfaces are being regularly cleaned. Hand sanitizing stations will be installed this week at all school entrances and outside of the cafeterias (with 60%+ alcohol-based solution). Students will be encouraged to wash their hands often and use hand sanitizer with regularity.

You can support our community efforts by following these standard precautionary measures and teaching them to your children:

- Stay home when sick and call your school to report fever and respiratory symptoms
- Do not come back to school until 24 hours after you are fever-free without medicine
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds/use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60%+) when soap is not available
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth and avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Tightly cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or inside your elbow, throw the tissue in the trash, wash your hands, and clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid travel to highly infected areas, when possible
- Continue to receive an annual flu shot if you have not done so already

Individuals with chronic health issues and/or individuals experiencing severe symptoms should call their doctor for further instructions and evaluation. If a student develops concerning symptoms at school, the parent will be notified and we will prepare that student for immediate dismissal home. If we have a confirmed case, we will then follow the guidance of the CDC immediately regarding school cleaning and possible closure, as school administrators and nurses have been asked to leave this decision-making to those at the CDC. Please be aware that we cannot send anyone home on the bus with concerning symptoms. Also, if your child calls or messages you during the school day that they are not feeling well, please ask them to see their school nurse. Part of the role of the school nurse is to track symptoms and monitor illnesses. Please do not dismiss your child without being assessed by the school nurse.

Be sure to provide the school with updated phone numbers and emergency contacts. Parents should prepare to promptly answer any call from the school and have pick-up arrangements made in advance so there is no delay in dismissal. If you have any questions please contact your school nurse. We thank you for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

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