

**Regional School Unit No. 56**  
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[www.rsu56.org](http://www.rsu56.org)  
Pam Doyen, Superintendent of Schools

March 12, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff and Community Members,

RSU 56 recognizes that the recent outbreak of the respiratory illness known as Coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused concern for stakeholders. I want to assure you that the school nurses and our district physician are working closely with Dr. Dora Mills and the CDC, Center for Disease Control and the Maine Department of Education to avoid further transmission of the virus. We are pleased to report that there are currently no cases of COVID-19 in the state of Maine reported per CDC. For further information, please visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html> for the most current information on COVID-19. RSU 56 will follow guidance from the DOE and CDC.

It is also very important to recognize that we see Influenza and other respiratory illnesses this time of year. The CDC continues to encourage individuals to receive the flu shot. In addition, the following CDC recommendations are essential in reducing the spread of germs:

- **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes.** Use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes, then dispose of the tissue. When a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects.** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.
- **Wash hands for 20 seconds.** Washing hands often under clean, running water can help prevent the spread of germs. If you cannot wash your hands, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60-95% alcohol until soap and water is available.
- **Call your medical provider.** If anyone in your family is experiencing any of the COVID-19 symptoms it is recommended that you contact your medical provider for advice before going to the office.

Please be aware that the custodial staff and bus drivers in RSU 56 schools are taking additional steps to disinfect daily all commonly touched areas in our schools and on our buses.

We will begin serving our students who receive their lunch in school cafeterias as opposed to self-selection. I certainly don't want to create any public alarm; however, RSU 56 believes that reducing multiple touching of surfaces will be supportive of our proactive steps. This change in cafeteria practice comes from an abundance of caution and not from any reported cases of COVID-19 in RSU 56.

Additionally, I am reviewing the pandemic illness/flu plans prepared by the Oxford County Emergency Management Agency and the CDC. As you might suspect, planning requires proactive actions and forethought to minimize personal and emotional disruption. It is important that your family also take the time to plan quarantine details before they are necessary to deploy. Although the MDOE is not recommending any school closures at this time, I think that it's important for your family to consider such challenges and the impact on families should this become a necessary action. We are meeting to discuss what remote learning would look like in RSU 56. Please do not panic. It is, however, very important that your family have a plan in the event this extreme action is necessary to protect the health of the communities of RSU 56.

Please continue to wash your hands often with soap and water and maintain a reasonable distance from others as suggested by the CDC. Please remain home if you or your children have symptoms associated with COVID-19 such as a fever of 100.

Thank you in advance for following the recommendations above and sharing them with your family.

Sincerely,



Pam Doyen