

March 2, 2020

Please accept this communication regarding the Novel Coronavirus (newly abbreviated COVID-19). The Novel Coronavirus is a virus that can infect the respiratory tract, and spread similarly to cold viruses. Information to date suggests that COVID-19 causes mild-to-moderate illness and symptoms like the flu, including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. At this time, The Center for Disease Control (CDC) confirms that there have been no cases reported in New Jersey.

The health and safety of our students and staff are a priority for the Manville School District. As you may be aware, the CDC states that more cases of COVID-19 “are likely to be identified in the coming days, including more cases in the United States.” As a result, we would like to communicate some important items with our school community.

The NJ Department of Health is working closely with our county health department to monitor the situation closely and is preparing guidance documents for health care professionals to be able to effectively respond to any cases that may be identified in the State. Please contact your principal if a member of your household has recently traveled to one of the substantially impacted areas: China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Iran, or Hong Kong. The DOE recommends that school districts ask any students or employees who returned to the school from the above-listed areas within the last two weeks — and have the symptoms of respiratory illness — contact the school immediately and seek medical attention.

Our school district has policies in place to guide us through these types of situations. District Policy 5141.2 (8451 for Esmay) requires that we comply with all regulations of the State Department of Education and the State Departments of Health, as well as the Somerset County Health Department. District Policy 6173 (2412 for Esmay) provides home instruction for students who cannot participate in the regular education program due to temporary health conditions.

According to the CDC, “While the immediate risk to this new virus to the American public is believed to be low at this time, everyone can do their part to help us respond to this emerging public health threat.” Our school nurses monitor absences and report any flu-like symptoms to the health department. It is recommended that individuals follow these public health guidelines, not just for COVID-19, but also to prevent the spread of influenza:

- Prevent the spread of germs by covering coughs and sneezes.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. If you use a tissue, throw it in the trash.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home if you are sick and avoid sick people.
- Review and follow the CDC travel advisory:
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/novel-coronavirus-china> when planning travel. If you or a family member becomes ill after returning home to the United States, call a healthcare provider.
- For more information visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention FAQ on Coronavirus website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>

Please note, we have a portion of our website with applicable documents posted. As situations evolve, we are prepared to comply with the directions from the State and local health agencies, and we will make adjustments as necessary.

Regards,



Robert Beers, Superintendent of Schools

Additional Resources

CDC's dedicated 2019-nCoV website at <https://www.cdc.gov/nCoV>

The New Jersey Department of Health: <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

Somerset County Health Department:

<https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-health-safety/health-department/services/disease-prevention/novel-coronavirus-2019-2641>