



PORT WASHINGTON Union Free School District

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

While the risk of contracting COVID-19 for New Yorkers remains low, we understand concern among community members continues to be at a high level. At this moment, although there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nassau County, we recognize community residents would like to be kept abreast on what the District is doing about the situation. We are continuing to closely monitor COVID-19 and are proactively following guidance from the Nassau County Department of Health, New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as new information becomes available.

Please know that the District has been and will continue to properly cleanse and sanitize each building, including classroom desks, keyboards, and other communal areas. As we noted in our last letter, prevention practices mirror basic flu-prevention practices, which include:

- Wash hands regularly
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or use a tissue, not directly into your hands
- Avoid touching your face
- Avoid close contact with others who are sick or showing symptoms of illness
- Stay home if you are feeling sick and contact your physician's office

We've attached the latest available information—issued by the CDC—in question and answer format. For more updates and additional information regarding health protocols and COVID-19, community members are encouraged to refer to the following:

- NYS Department of Health: www.health.ny.gov
- CDC (Centers for Disease Control): www.cdc.gov
- Nassau County Health Department: www.nassaucountyny.gov
- World Health Organization (WHO): www.who.int
- NYS Department of Health Hotline: 1-888-364-3065

Should you have any questions about the District's health protocols and procedures, please contact my office at 516.767.5005.

Sincerely

Michael J. Hynes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath



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What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19