Dear Parents and Guardians,

This letter will outline some basic information regarding the district’s planning around the Coronavirus (COVID-19) that has been diagnosed in Massachusetts. The CDC has not labeled this as a “pandemic” but we should all be aware of the basic precautions everyone should take.

There are no known or suspected cases of the Coronavirus in the district at this time although we know that there have been cases of influenza and the common cold (and they were much more prevalent prior to February vacation). At this time, the best practice is that students who are not ill can safely come to school. The schools will remain open. We will keep you updated with any important information. To date, our nurse leader and administrative team are working closely with the DESE, DPH, and the MASS to keep updated on best practices in preparing for any local Coronavirus outbreak. We have increased daily surveillance, identified at-risk individuals, updated our pandemic plan, created spaces for students who may be sick and waiting for parent/guardian pickup, enhanced our cleaning and sanitizing of buildings and are planning for additional steps if they become necessary. It is important to remember that our schools remain at low risk for COVID-19.

To keep any illness from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children home. Any children who are sick in school will be sent home. As always, if anyone displays the following symptoms they should not come to work or school and they are advised to contact their primary care physician.

- temperature greater than 100.4
- coughing
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- any rash not yet diagnosed by a physician
- red or pink itchy eye and/or drainage from the eyes
- any contagious illness such as chickenpox, strep throat or flu.

While this is a public health concern, the CDC continues to report that the immediate risk to the general public remains low at this time. Yet, in today’s connected world, with a large number of district families traveling during school vacation weeks, the potential for infectious disease is always of concern. As with seasonal flu and strep infections, there are general precautions we can all take to remain as healthy as possible.

- Practice good hand hygiene. Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Use Alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
● When coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. You can also cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
● Avoid sharing drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, dishes, towels or other items. Wash these items thoroughly with soap and water after use.
● Practice other good health habits: Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food
● Teach your children to stay at least six feet away from people who are sick.
● People who are sick should stay home from work or school and stay away from other people until they are better.
● Avoid places where there are large groups of people when possible (shopping malls, movie theaters, etc.).

If you have questions, please contact your healthcare provider. The following websites will also be providing updates:


If the Coronavirus spreads more widely or is labeled as a pandemic, schools may close for days or weeks. The purpose of closing schools will be to keep children from getting sick. If schools are closed, children should stay at home and the district is planning for how we may continue our students’ education. Begin planning now for childcare in your home.

Recommendations may change during the course of a pandemic outbreak. We will continue to update the community and our families through the district’s website, send additional information home via different sources, and use communications similar to weather delays and cancellations. If you have additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact school officials directly.

Sincerely,

David B. Hopson

Dr. David B. Hopson

Superintendent

---District Vision Statement---

The Gateway Regional School District will provide an exemplary education that challenges all students in an instructional setting appropriate to their needs.