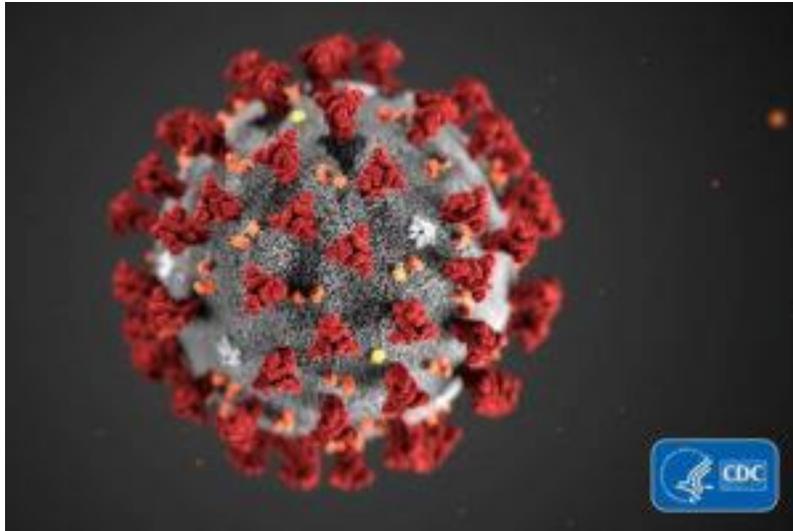


CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: From the Office of the Superintendent, February 28, 2020



Dear Essex Regional Educational Services Staff and Stakeholders,

We continue to monitor the alerts from the Center for Disease Control ([CDC](#)) about the possibility of the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) within the United States. We are following the current guidance posted by the [New Jersey Department of Education](#) and the [New Jersey Department of Health](#). Please note that at this time we have no immediate concerns about this virus in our schools.

However, as recommended by the CDC, which has encouraged communities to develop specific measures to prepare themselves to respond to any potential local transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19, the Commission will be working to update our existing Emergency Management Procedure (which currently addresses prevention of contagious diseases) to address any possible disruption to our schools that a pandemic would cause. We are working with Department of Education, health departments, and central administration to develop a scalable plan to address the continuation of instruction for our students should a shutdown be required.

As per the NJ Department of Health, all families with a child returning from the area of the world highly impacted by the coronavirus – most notably, at present,

Mainland China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, and Japan (see the list at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>) – to please contact their child’s principal and/or school nurse *prior* to sending their child back to school.

If a child has traveled to one of these areas within the last two weeks and has already returned to school, we ask that the family remove the child and alert the principal and school nurse. The Commission and school nurses will work with these families to determine the appropriate timeline for re-entry to school.

Please only notify the school district about your own child/children who has/have recently traveled to a country impacted by COVID-19. We cannot discuss the health concerns of other students due to confidentiality restrictions.

We will be working to increase our schools’ stock-supply of hand sanitizers. While frequent hand washing is the Commission’s preference to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, if and when soap and water are not available, hand sanitizers will be provided as an alternative. For our younger students, teachers will be asked to emphasize the correct use of hand sanitizers: apply a dime-sized amount to dry hands and rub hands together until completely dry.

At this time, our District is implementing the following protocols if COVID-19 is detected in the area or if any student/staff has recently traveled to a country impacted by the coronavirus (or has a close family member who resides in the same household):

- Sick students with a fever should not attend school. School nurses will have the authority to send sick and feverish students home (any sick students waiting to be picked up will be kept in an area separate from general student body);
- Sick staff are encouraged to also stay home and can be sent home by the school nurse if infection is suspected;
- Students traveling from endemic areas or those who have infected family members should stay home for two weeks and only return if asymptomatic;
- In the event of a quarantine requiring a school shutdown, the Commission will implement its emergency pandemic plan (currently in planning); and
- As a continuing preventative measure custodians will clean high contact surfaces (door handles, handrails, etc.) as well as large contact areas more frequently

with disinfectant products to help lessen the transfer of common bacteria/viruses.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. **We recommend that everyone follow the CDC guidelines provided below to help prevent the transmission of respiratory infections:**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Follow the CDC's recommendations for using a respiratory face mask: The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of face masks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of others in close settings (at home or in a healthcare facility).

Also, as Spring Break is near, if you are preparing any international travel for yourself or family we encourage you to check the [CDC Coronavirus Information for Travel](#) for precautions and updates on non-essential travel.

As more information becomes available, these guidelines may need to be adjusted accordingly. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our students, staff, and community safe and healthy.

Educationally Yours,

Dr. Laurie W. Newell,

Superintendent of Schools

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Additional Resources:

- [Coronavirus Situation Summary \(as of 2/27\)](#)
- [NJDOE Corona Virus Guidance & Resources and Updates](#)
- [NJ Department of Health Coronavirus Fact Sheet](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus Guidance for Prevention \(as of February 14, 2020\)](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [World Health Organization Coronavirus Information](#)

How to Talk to Your Kids about Coronavirus:

- [How to Talk to Your Anxious Child About the Coronavirus](#) – *Psychology Today*
- [How to talk to your kids about the coronavirus \(and ease their fears\)](#) – *NBC News*

February 28, 2020