

# Agawam Public Schools



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Dear Agawam Families,

We understand that many families have questions regarding the recent outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus and how it may impact our local community. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is providing daily updates and recommendations. Please click on the following link to stay updated: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

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 a 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.
- When coughing and/or 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.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick whenever possible.
- Practice other good health habits: Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work, or school, especially if someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

It is important to keep children home from school when they are ill. If your child has any of the following symptoms, please keep them home from school: 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 eye, as well as any contagious illness such as chicken pox, strep throat, or flu. As you know, our district's attendance policy encourages a doctor's note when your child is ill, so that their absence is excused. However, while the coronavirus is a major concern, we will relax that policy and not require a doctor's note.

The Novel Coronavirus is an evolving situation that we are following closely, and we will continue to update you as information is shared with us. Please rest assured that we are monitoring student health concerns. We are in close communication with our local Health Agent, Massachusetts Department of Public Health/School Health Unit, as well as pediatric health care providers in our area. Our Building Maintenance Department is vigilantly sanitizing our educational spaces as we typically do during cold and flu season. Rest assured that we are following all recommended guidelines to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

We remain deeply committed to student and staff wellness and will continue to share new information with you about this evolving situation as necessary and when it becomes available.

Sincerely,

Steven P. Lemanski  
Superintendent of Schools

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c: School Committee

*"Put Children First"*