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## An Important Update from the Superintendent of Schools - COVID-19 Coronavirus

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March 8, 2020

Dear School Community Members,

The evolution of COVID-19, or the coronavirus, continues to move at a rapid rate across the globe. As we now know, Westchester County has the most concentrated number of confirmed cases in the state. As a result of this fact, it is important that everyone in our school community demonstrates responsible care for themselves and great consideration for others.

In the schools, we will continue to perform extensive cleaning of all spaces on a daily basis. To support these efforts, the Governor's State of Emergency has provided schools with more flexibility in the choice of cleaning agents - permitting schools to utilize a wider array of products that will be effective in combating the coronavirus.

Additionally, I remain committed to communicating with the entire school community. Due to the rapid evolution of the conditions surrounding the virus and shifts in the recommendations from governmental agencies, including the Department of Health, it will be impossible to provide the community with all changes in guidance. Guidance is literally changing daily and in some cases hourly, as the experts learn more about the virus and the outbreak in our region. However, what I commit to is that I will communicate when there is a confirmed risk to our school community. As I am in constant communication with the Department of Health and our school physician, I expect to be on top of the facts. While I cannot respond to, or dispell every rumor that may surface, I will advise the community when a known risk is present or if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our schools.

What should I do if my child is sick?

1. Keep your child home from school if they are displaying symptoms of illness.
2. Contact your family physician for guidance.
3. Refer to the [CDC guide on steps to take when you're sick](#)
4. If you have a history of recent international travel or a potential exposure to a person with confirmed COVID-19, this is important information to relay to your care provider via telephone.
5. As always, our outstanding school nurses can be a resource of information for you.
6. To understand more about the COVID-19, [please review the CDC FAQ document on it.](#)

What can we do each day to protect ourselves from illness or prevent spreading illness?

1. Voluntary home isolation - Students and staff should stay home when ill, except to obtain medical care or necessities .
2. Respiratory etiquette - Cover coughs and sneezes; use shirt sleeves if tissues are not available. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
3. Hand hygiene - Regular and thorough hand washing with soap and water, or alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

What are the next steps for the Irvington schools as it pertains to COVID-19?

The District will:

1. Continue to communicate all confirmed risks to the health of the school community;
2. Continue to extensively clean/sterilize each school;
3. Evaluate domestic and international travel/field trips and communicate any changes in plans as soon as possible. Such decisions will be made locally and with the guidance from the appropriate agencies and professions; and
4. Develop distance learning plans to support the continuity of instruction and the maintenance of skills and knowledge should the District need to close for an extended period of time.

The District will continue to add resources to its [COVID-19/coronavirus resource page](#). All community members are encouraged to visit this page regularly for updates or to identify potential answers to questions that you may have. Today, we have added a [new Q&A document](#) to answer questions that are commonly being asked related to this situation we all face. Please take a few minutes to read it, and share the link with others who may benefit from it.

I understand that this is an anxious time for everyone in our community. Supporting one another and taking care of ourselves is key. Please be sure to rest, eat well and if you are feeling anxious or have concerns about others who are experiencing anxiety, know that our school counseling team is here to lend support. Together, we will get through this unsettling time and will maintain our continued focus on every student, every day.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

My best,

Kris

Dr. Kris Harrison  
Superintendent of Schools

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