

ERVING SCHOOL UNION #28  
ERVING, LEVERETT, NEW SALEM, WENDELL, SHUTESBURY

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March 11, 2020

Dear Union #28 Staff and Families,

On March 10, 2020 Governor Charlie Baker declared a state of emergency for Massachusetts. This declaration will enable the state of Massachusetts to deal with this situation with more flexibility. We continue to work closely with the Department of Public Health, local health boards and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to mitigate any potential risks to our students and our communities and to plan for the least educational disruption for our students.

The Centers for Disease Control and Massachusetts Department of Public Health continue to report that the immediate risk remains low and as of now, there are still no cases in our community.

We continue to work closely with health officials and administrators and are developing responses based on the recommendations of local and state health departments. We are preparing a list of resources to share with staff related to the COVID-19/Coronavirus outbreak. We continue to monitor and refine our preventive cleaning measures and will continue to do so as additional guidance is provided.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer. Look for one that is 60% or higher alcohol-based.
- Keep your children away from others who are sick or keep them home if they are ill.
- Teach children to cough and sneeze into a tissue (make sure to throw it away after each use) or to cough and sneeze into their arm or elbow, not their hands.
- Clean and disinfect your home as usual using regular household cleaning sprays and wipes.
- Avoid touching your face; teach your children to do the same.
- Avoid travel to highly infected areas.

**Our handwashing protocol at school will be as follows:**

- Upon arrival in classroom
- Before and after lunch and recess
- At the end of the day

If students display flu-like symptoms, including a fever, cough, or shortness of breath, they should not come to school. Families are advised to call the child's primary care physician for guidance.

We are asking families to voluntarily report if their child is absent with a respiratory illness or fever.

If a student, staff, or community member associated with our school has been positively identified with COVID-19, we will coordinate with the local and state health boards regarding school closure recommendations. Current guidance indicates closure for at least 24-48 hours to sanitize building(s) or longer, as needed.

Families will be notified of any school closures using the same systems that are currently in place for snow day cancellations.

Administration is exploring options for learning opportunities. Alternative Structured Learning Days, assignment packets, online learning, reading lists and other developmentally appropriate learning activities are all part of a list of options we are exploring. It is important we plan for continuity for our students.

All field trips and large gatherings are cancelled until further notice. We will revisit this as the situation warrants.

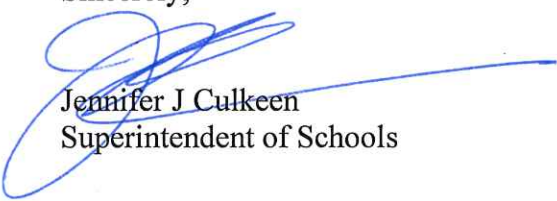
#### 180 Day Requirement:

In light of concerns about possible school closings for public health reasons, the Commissioner of Education has updated DESE's guidance about the requirement for 180 days of school to provide relief to districts. (Note: The Department will continue to revisit this guidance if the situation warrants it.):

- All days lost to health, weather, or safety emergencies between **the first day of the school year and March 15** must be made up by rescheduling full school days to ensure a 180-day school year.
- All days lost to health, weather or safety emergencies between **March 16 and June 1** must be made up to ensure a 180-day school year or until the district has reached its previously scheduled 185<sup>th</sup> day, whichever comes first. If all five snow days have been used prior to this point, the district is not required to schedule additional school days.

This situation is ever-changing and we will continue to update you as it unfolds.

Sincerely,



Jennifer J. Culkeen  
Superintendent of Schools