



Colchester School District

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March 2, 2020

Dear Colchester Families,

We hope you and your family had some time to rest and rejuvenate during the February break. As we prepare to welcome everyone back to school, we acknowledge that many Vermonters are feeling nervous as a result of the recent outbreak of the 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) and the media attention that has followed. We wanted to reach out to our employees, families and students to let you know that we are working with the **Agency of Education** and the **Vermont Department of Health** to ensure we are appropriately informed and prepared. Collectively, these two State divisions prioritize the health and safety of Vermont children and citizens statewide.

If you or your family visited Iran, Italy, S.Korea, Japan or China over winter break, please contact Patricia Hennard, Public Health Nurse at the Vermont Department of Health for information. She will provide guidance and assess your exposure risk. Patricia can be reached at (802) 951-0076 or (802) 863-7240.

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough and shortness of breath and can range from mild to severe, appearing 2-14 days after exposure. There is no evidence that children are more susceptible to COVID-19. Children who have been identified as having the virus have had mild symptoms of fever, runny nose and cough. Although severe complications have been reported, they appear to be uncommon.

As of today, there are currently no known cases of COVID-19 in Vermont. A recent letter by Education Secretary Dan French, notes that at this point, Vermont residents are much more likely to become sick with a cold or the flu than to be exposed to COVID-19. Many of the precautions that help prevent other respiratory diseases, like colds and the flu, can also help keep an illness like COVID-19 from spreading. Here are a few important points to know:

- Keep your child home when they are sick. You will help prevent others from catching their illness. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. **If your child has a fever, they need to be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.**
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes, then dispose of the tissue. When a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.

Amy Minor
Superintendent
of Schools

George Trieb
Business & Operations
Manager

Carrie Lutz
Director of Student
Support Services

Gwendolyn Carmolli
Director of Curriculum
& Instruction

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home/ school, especially when someone is ill. Our maintenance staff will be following CDC guidelines on the best method to clean and disinfect our schools.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds. Washing hands often under clean, running water can help prevent the spread of germs.
- If you cannot wash your hands, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60-95% alcohol.

There have been a range of media reports on COVID-19. Some of them are sensational and very alarming while others are factual and informative; discerning the difference can be a challenge. We encourage you to monitor your media intake, utilize reputable sources, and to assure your children that school is a safe and healthy environment.

We will be working closely with the Vermont Department of Health to monitor illness in our schools and educate our students to keep our school community healthy and safe. If you would like to learn more, please see the below resources:

- [COVID-19 VT Department of Health Website](#)
- [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#)
- [COVID-19 Travel Resource](#)

Sincerely,

Colchester School District Administration