

March 5, 2020

Dear Boston Public Schools Community:

Though the risk remains low in Boston right now, all of us in the Boston Public Schools (BPS) are concerned about the growing presence of coronavirus disease 2019 (also called COVID-19) in the United States. We are writing to provide you with the latest information and direction from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) related to the coronavirus.

People who have traveled to China, Iran, Italy, Japan, or South Korea are asked to stay at home for 14 days upon return to the United States to monitor their health and are asked not to go to school or work. This applies to travel that has occurred in the last two weeks and going forward. It also applies whether or not your child has already returned to school since your return.

Families should contact their schools and report the students' absence due to the travel restrictions. BPS will be in contact with you to arrange for appropriate education and support while your student remains at home.

What does “monitor your health” mean?

- Take your temperature with a thermometer twice a day and watch for a fever. A fever is a temperature of 100.4°F/38°C or higher.
- Watch for symptoms including a fever, cough, trouble breathing, and shortness of breath.

What does it mean to limit interactions?

- Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares during the 14-day period.
- Avoid crowded places (shopping centers, schools, workplace, church and movie theaters).
- Keep your distance from others (6 feet or 2 meters away).

Contact your health care provider if symptoms appear. If you do not have a health care provider, please contact a local emergency room and discuss your symptoms and travel history before arranging to be seen by a doctor.

All of us in the BPS community should practice the following precautions proven to reduce the risk of spreading respiratory viruses and keep everyone safe:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – which is approximately the length of time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice.
- If you do not have access to soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces touched by the person with symptoms.

More information is available at bphc.org or cdc.gov and translations of their materials are available on their website and below.



CDC What You Need to Know: [English](#), [Chinese](#), [Spanish](#)

CDC What To Do if You're Sick: [English](#), [Chinese](#), [Spanish](#)

Boston Public Health Commission Fact Sheet: [English](#), [Chinese](#), [Haitian Creole](#),
[Portuguese](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#)

If you have specific questions, you are welcome to call the Mayor's HealthLine at 617-534-5050 during the week or dial 311 after business hours and on weekends.

This is a rapidly changing situation. We are in daily communication with public health officials and closely monitoring the situation. We will provide you updated information as it becomes available. You will find that on the BPS website at bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus.

Stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Cassellius".

Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Superintendent

