



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## *Office of the Superintendent*

*Timothy M. Van Tassel*  
Superintendent

*Laura Guerrette*  
Executive Secretary

February 28, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As a follow-up to our [February 3<sup>rd</sup>](#) Novel Coronavirus correspondence, we would like to share additional information as it relates to our preparedness as a school district and community. Since our last communication on this topic, there have been no confirmed cases in the State of Connecticut. While our imminent risk level remains low, we are aware that the virus has been spreading throughout the globe and there is growing concern that the virus is likely to reach communities within the United States within the next several months. In preparation for the possible spread of the virus and its impacts; school districts and communities across the country have been encouraged to review their pandemic plans and closely monitor the activities of local, state, and federal health agencies.

To provide everyone with the reassurance that we are acting in the best interest of the public, I would like to highlight the steps we have taken over the past several weeks to prepare our schools and families for the risks associated with the spread of this virus:

- Multiple communications through town and school social media and emergency notification systems;
- Reviews and revisions of pandemic plans for the Town of Suffield and Suffield Public Schools;
- Coronavirus informational materials posted on the Suffield Public Schools homepage under the “Emergency” tab;
- Pandemic planning meeting (February 5, 2019) with Suffield Public Schools Administration and Town of Suffield Emergency Management Officials and First Responders;
- Establishment of an internal monitoring system for health-related student and staff absences within the Suffield Public Schools;
- Establishment of communication protocol with North Central Connecticut Health District for reporting influenza-like outbreak information;
- Suffield Public Schools Pandemic Planning Meeting with Administration and School Nurses (February 28, 2020);
- Weekly communications with local, regional, and state officials regarding Coronavirus preparedness.

While we remain hopeful that the spread of this virus will be contained before it becomes a community-spread illness throughout the United States, we are taking the precautions that have been deemed appropriate and necessary at this time. The best steps the community can take to prevent exposure are the same precautions we should be taking daily to avoid exposure to the common cold and influenza:

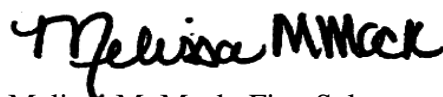
- *Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;*
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;*
- *Avoid close contact with people who are sick;*
- ***Stay home when you are sick and do not return to work or school until you have been fever-free without the use of fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours;***
- *Cover your coughs or sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash. If tissues aren't available, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow; and*
- *Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.*

As new information becomes available in the days, weeks, and months again, we will continue to update the community of Suffield as needed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Suffield Public Schools or Town of Suffield protocols on this correspondence, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Timothy M. Van Tasel, Superintendent  
Suffield Public Schools  
[Tvantasel@suffield.org](mailto:Tvantasel@suffield.org)  
860.668.3800



Melissa M. Mack, First Selectwoman  
Town of Suffield  
[Mmack@suffieldct.gov](mailto:Mmack@suffieldct.gov)  
860.668.3838