

Superintendent's March 11th Update Re: COVID-19

March 11, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am writing to keep you informed with respect to the District's efforts as we move forward with teaching and learning amidst reports from county, state, and federal officials concerning the new Coronavirus (COVID-19).

As you know, the District has been pro-active with its sanitizing efforts throughout cold and flu season. Nevertheless, we have been ramped up our work to include school buses and the playground equipment. In addition to doing what is possible during the school day and evenings, we have this work continuing on Saturdays; March 14 will be our third consecutive Saturday that our custodians are performing deep cleaning. We are most grateful to them!

Our secured vestibules and visitor policy are serving us well in our efforts to stop the transmission of germs in our schools. Visitors are now limited to the vestibules, with these areas receiving frequent sanitization. All new registrations will be processed at the Conference Center. Today, we decided to restructure parent-teacher conferences for UPK and LOMS. (See letter posted.) They will be conducted via telephone rather than face-to-face. Teachers will, nevertheless, reference their gradebooks as well as student work since they will be calling you from their classrooms using the telephones installed this past summer as part of our bond project that supports emergency protocols.

As a precautionary measure, we have postponed an elementary grade-level field trip to the Long Island Children's Museum. There are many hands-on exhibits there and we do not see the need to expose children to public areas at this time, when the opportunity to visit at a later date is possible.

With respect to future events, e.g., FXH parent-teacher conferences, field trips, LOMS theater production, special events, etc, we plan to make decisions in as timely a manner as possible, given the most up-to-date guidance provided by the Departments of Health for Nassau County and New York State as well as the State Education Department. We do not, however, want to sound the alarm and eliminate all aspects of extra-curricular school life, if this is not necessary. It is important for the children to have these things as part of a well-rounded education.

We have also been in regular contact with our school physician, whose advice we are following. He explained that since New York State will now begin testing for COVID-19, we may be hearing of more cases in the next couple of weeks. I will keep you informed of any new guidance we may receive. Since this is a rapidly changing situation, please check our website daily as well as the New York State Department of Health website for updates:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

You are also encouraged to visit the National Association of School Psychologists' website. You will find resources and recommendations on how to talk to children about COVID-19:

<https://apps.nasponline.org/search-results.aspx?q=how+to+talk+to+your+child+about+COVID-19>

As part of our pandemic planning, we are meeting with faculty and staff to ensure that if Island Park Schools were placed in a situation where we needed to close for a day or more, instruction could still occur. Our goal is to provide some measure of instruction as well as support services. To some extent, digital learning would be recommended. Hence, if you do not have a computer with Internet access, please send a note to the principal so other arrangements can be planned for your child.

Thank you for your continued understanding and support.

Sincerely,

Rosmarie T. Bovino, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools