

# PAWLING CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent of Schools



Small Size ~ Diverse Opportunities

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March 4, 2020

Dear Pawling Families, Staff, and Students,

This communication updates information we have posted on our website as of February 10, 2020 regarding seasonal flu and novel Corona Virus (COVID-19).

At this time, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Dutchess County. We continue to monitor the situation and are very fortunate to have excellent communication with the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health. We received guidance from The Commissioner of Health as well as the New York State Department of Health, the New York State Education Department, and we continue to monitor updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization.

I would like to begin this updated correspondence by complimenting the staff, students, and families in Pawling, all of whom have demonstrated a high degree of calm amidst a tremendous amount of media coverage and real uncertainty. Thank you. Our students benefit when we adults demonstrate thoughtful and measured responses to uncertainty and fluid situations. We have received very few questions from families at this time, so the following anticipates some questions families, students or staff may have.

Q: What are we doing routinely to mitigate the spread of any infectious disease?

A: All touch surfaces, such as doorknobs, desks, door jambs are cleaned each night with an approved germicidal spray designed expressly for this purpose. We have been using this method for several years. We also encourage a culture of personal hygiene including hand washing and staying home when sick. We are redoubling our efforts to be sure that all restrooms have a consistent supply of soap and toweling since we are seeing, happily, more use of soap and paper toweling. Cafeteria tables are wiped down between each lunch period with a food safe solution.

Q: Will schools be closed?

A: We certainly hope not. Should this become necessary, we would follow the direction and guidance of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health and our school physician.

Q: If schools are closed, would instruction continue online?

A: At this point, we are not making plans to offer anything like a full program online. Depending on a number of factors, such as guidance from the State Education Department and length of closure, we might make accommodations based on specific needs.

Q: How can families prepare for the possibility of school closures?

A: Families of young children should review their childcare plans, considering that center-based care might not be available.

Q: Is the District planning on providing meals for students who may rely on school meals if schools are closed?

A: We do not have plans to provide meals at this time. Should the need arise, we would do everything possible to assist with community needs and work with social service partners in the region.

Q: Will staff, students, or families be informed if we have a diagnosed COVID-19 case in our schools?

A: As with any infectious disease, we would be guided by the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health. No personal information would be released to the public, but we would work with the Department to mitigate potential spread of the disease.

Q: What about international trips, domestic trips, or large gatherings?

A: At this point, we are not planning on cancelling events, although we continue to monitor the situation and pay attention to guidance provided by the Dutchess County and New York State Departments of Health. We are pursuing options to postpone some trips. School personnel will be in touch with affected families.

Q: What can students, families, and staff do to reduce the risk of infection of COVID-19 or seasonal flu?

A: Your cooperation is very important. Please see below.

- Provide information about your illness to the school nurse. Our nurses monitor the percentage of students who are ill with a single disease and your information helps make their analysis accurate.
- Stay home if you are sick and do not return to school or work unless you have been free of fever, without fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours.
- Practice good personal hygiene by covering your nose or mouth if you sneeze or cough and wash your hands promptly and frequently.
- Avoid putting your hands in your nose, eyes, or mouth.
- Hand sanitizers help, especially if applied to clean hands.

Q: Where can we get additional information?

A: Please do not hesitate to call your school nurse, Mr. Scott Rice, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, or me and see links below:

[Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health](#)

[New York State Department of Health](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

Thank you for your support of the students we share.

Sincerely,



Kim Fontana