



# WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future*

EMILY J. PARKS  
Superintendent of Schools

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE – MARCH 5, 2020

March 5, 2020

Dear Westwood Families:

I am writing in follow-up to yesterday's letter with several updates regarding COVID-19 or "coronavirus."

The District continues to work closely with the local Board of Health, MA Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In addition to the District's preparedness and emergency management protocols and plans, the District participates as a member of the Town's emergency management team to ensure a coordinated response should that become necessary.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) provided updated guidance yesterday. The new recommendations affect those travelers who have returned, or will return, from travel to China, Iran, Italy or South Korea (the countries for whom there is a Level 3 travel advisory).

***We are asking travelers who have returned from China, Iran, Italy or South Korea, or who will return from these four countries, to self-monitor at home for 14 days upon entry into the United States.***

This guidance does apply retroactively to travelers who have recently returned from these four countries.

If you, your child, or any member of your family returned from travel to one of these countries in the last 14 days, the travelers are requested to stay at home until 14 days have passed. This applies to your child even if they had previously been cleared to be in school. This will continue to be the protocol going forward until such time as the CDC changes the guidance.

- If you need to self-monitor your child, please call your child's school and let them know that they will be out due to the travel restrictions.
- If anyone in your family has recently traveled to these four countries, please monitor them for symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath or other respiratory symptoms. If symptoms appear, contact your health care provider. If you do not have a health care provider, contact a local emergency room and alert them to your child's symptoms. Please do not go to a hospital or health care provider without alerting them beforehand.

Our public health officials remind us that the risk level in Massachusetts of contracting COVID-19 continues to be low. At the same time, we are in the middle of the regular cold and flu season. Health officials continue to emphasize that the *most important* preventative measures each of us can take are:

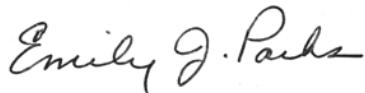
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes and face.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.

As is always the case, we encourage students and staff who are ill to stay home. We remind you that students and staff must be free of fever for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication before returning to school following an illness.

Last weekend, our Operations Department took additional steps to clean and disinfect all of our schools, and they will do so again this weekend. Our ongoing daily cleaning protocols include disinfecting high-touch areas such as doorknobs, desks, and countertops. We have ordered additional cleaning and disinfecting materials to ensure that we have sufficient supplies on hand. Though hand sanitizer is currently difficult to purchase, at the moment we have it in inventory and are stocking the hand sanitizing stations in our schools.

Finally, we know that children may be asking questions about the coronavirus. You may find this MA Public Health [fact sheet](#) and this resource from the National Association of School Psychologists, ["Talking to Children About COVID-19,"](#) helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily J. Parks".

Emily J. Parks  
Superintendent