

Coronavirus Update: March 10, 2020

Dear Dobbs Ferry Families,

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) story continues to unfold, school districts are receiving more guidance and new information almost daily. Our goal is to keep you informed and safe. Below is the latest update:

Guidelines for Long-Term Closures

If there is a contact concern at school, I will consult with our School District physician, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and Westchester County Health Department. Districts will be notified by the NYSDOH if a child or staff member tests positive for Coronavirus and health officials will determine the next steps needed for the school community. **If a student or staff member attended one of our schools prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case, the NYSDOH will require an initial 24-hour closure in order to begin the investigation of the contacts within the school.** No school personnel have been tasked with doing this. To date, the District **does not** have any confirmed cases among any of its students, parents, or staff.

Off-Site Learning

Since our District uses Google as our platform for email, we can use [Google Classroom](#), Google Hangouts Meet and Docs for teachers in the upper grades (6-12) to post assignments, materials, and resources, if we need to close schools. Students in grades 6-12 also have their own Chromebooks through our 1:1 program. Elementary School teachers (K-5) will remain in contact with parents and guardians via the website and email to support learning at home. The District recognizes that the kind of education that normally occurs in a classroom cannot be replicated at home. However, the District will make every effort to ensure that the work students receive while out of school is grade appropriate, valuable and supports their ongoing learning. The District is expecting more guidance on this issue from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED).

Cancellation of Large Events & Travel

State health officials will notify Districts when to close schools and/or cancel large events. The County does not have direct authority for these kinds of decisions but are required to implement State decisions and to manage quarantines. Currently, we have not been advised to cancel school gatherings or large events, but will certainly share any directives should we receive them in the future.

As you plan for any travel over spring break (April 6th-13th), please consult the [CDC travel FAQs](#). We'll continue to seek guidance from our state and local health officials to make final determinations about student field trips and travel. We have canceled the High School trip to Spain as per NYSED guidance on international travel, and we continue to monitor the situation for the Middle School trip to Washington, D.C. in June and the Varsity Softball trip to Orlando, Florida over spring break.

School Cleaning Regimen

Disinfecting common areas and cleaning surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, and countertops occur regularly using the guidelines provided by the NYSDOH. A thorough, deep

cleaning of our buildings was completed this past weekend and we continue to maintain our cleaning efforts at an elevated level.

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizers

We have enlisted the help of faculty and staff to remind students to wash their hands after the bathroom, before they eat, and after they return from recess and after lunch. There are hand sanitizer dispensers located in common spaces such as the library, cafeteria and gym, as well as in the hallways. In the elementary school, soap and water are available in every classroom. Older students are encouraged to bring and use their own hand sanitizers if possible, and hand sanitizers are available in many classrooms. New York State has given schools permission to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with supervision. Signs will be in full display around the buildings also reminding students of the importance of washing their hands. Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are important in helping to contain the virus.

Reliable Sources of Information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health are legitimate sources of information. The District is maintaining a website resource page with reliable, important links to the latest information <https://www.dfsd.org/Domain/613>. In addition, phishing emails are beginning to show up. Neither the CDC nor the NYSDOH has time to send random emails. To avoid phishing scams, always go directly to their websites.

If you or your children are sick, please stay home. We are encouraging staff to stay home if they are sick. We also ask parents to stay home and refrain from attending parent/teacher conferences if they are sick. Teachers are happy to set up times for phone conferences under these circumstances. Our Principals have asked teachers to give students, who are home because they are sick, time when they return to school to complete missed assignments or tests.

Throughout the week, we will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available. We encourage you to go to our [District website Health Watch/Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) to review recently added links for more specifics. The District will continue to work with all of our partners to take any additional steps needed when and if they become necessary. It is natural for concerns to continue to escalate and it is critical that we resist the urge to allow fear and uncertainty to guide our actions, both at school and at home. We will continue to keep the community informed through regular communications.

Thank you for your patience and support during this unsettling time.

Sincerely,
Lisa Brady Ed.D.
Superintendent