

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Due to the growing concerns people may have regarding Coronavirus, I write to update you on information and the actions that have been taken by Eastern Suffolk BOCES.

**The following information regarding the Coronavirus has been provided to us by the NYS Department of Health and the NYS Department of Education:**

A new coronavirus called 2019 Novel (new) Coronavirus (COVID-19) was first found in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. This virus had not been found in humans before. This coronavirus can lead to fever, cough and trouble breathing or shortness of breath. There are thousands of diagnosed cases in China and cases being diagnosed in an increasing number of countries including the United States, New York, and most recently Long Island.

**What do we know?**

Since this virus is very new, health authorities continue to carefully watch how this virus spreads. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working hard to learn as much as possible about this new virus, so that we can better understand how it spreads and causes illness. The CDC considers this virus to be a public health emergency of international concern. Based on current information the CDC recommends avoiding travel to countries that have been seriously impacted. Updated travel information related to 2019-nCoV can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

**Prevention**

Like other viruses prevention is key to containment. There are currently no vaccines available to protect against this virus. The New York State Department of Health (DOH) recommends the following ways to minimize the spread of all respiratory viruses (as well as the common cold and various forms of influenza (“the flu”), including COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. If you use a tissue, throw it in the trash.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- CDC recommends that travelers avoid all countries seriously impacted (see the above link).

**Symptoms**

Information to date suggests that 2019-nCoV causes mild-to-moderate illness and symptoms like the flu, including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. So far it seems to have more of an impact on individuals with existing underlying respiratory conditions. Additional information

about the impact of COVID–19 can be found on the website of the Center for Disease control at the following link.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>

Agency leadership will continue to work and collaborate with the New York State and Suffolk County Departments of Health, the New York State Education Department, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in an effort to respond to any health-related concerns that may arise in our region.

As always the health and safety of our students and staff is always the highest priority. As such, you can rest assured that our custodial crew has initiated enhanced cleaning protocols to ensure our learning environments are as safe as possible. This involves an increased emphasis on disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as desks, computer keyboards, doorknobs, etc.

We appreciate your partnership in following the guidelines indicated above.