

March 10, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On Monday evening, I participated in a conference call with other CT school and town leaders, which was led by Governor Lamont and focused on Coronavirus planning and actions. This letter shares steps already being taken in Hamden Public Schools to minimize the impact of Coronavirus in our community as well as additional steps added as a result of recommendations by the Governor.

The following proactive steps have been enacted with the best interest of our students, staff and greater community in mind:

**Cleaning:** We have increased cleaning measures in all of our buildings, with a focus on disinfecting of rails, doorknobs and other frequently touched surfaces. First Student is also increasing the level and frequency of cleaning on all of our buses.

**Healthy Behaviors:** Through our Websites, letters to families, email messages to staff, signs in our buildings and discussions and reminders to students, we have and continue to promote behaviors that help everyone stay healthy. These behaviors include frequent handwashing with soap for at least 20 seconds, not coughing or sneezing without covering your mouth/nose with a tissue/sleeve, not touching your face (eyes, nose, mouth), avoiding close contact with people who are sick, and staying home when you are sick.

**Social Distancing and Limiting Travel:** The Governor has asked that all activities involving groups of 100 or more be postponed. In addition, the Governor has recommended that CT students not travel for field trips that may include exposure to large groups and/or contact with people from outside our immediate area. This means that all school-wide events, external professional development and field trips will be cancelled or postponed until further notice. (Trips abroad have already been cancelled.)

Today, the CIAC (Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference) made the difficult decision to cancel all remaining CIAC winter tournament games.

We are in the process of reviewing alternatives for in-person parent conferences currently scheduled for March and April. Those wishing to register their kindergarten children are strongly encouraged to utilize the online registration form located on our Website at [www.hamden.org/resources/register](http://www.hamden.org/resources/register).

**School-Based Health:** Our school nurses are skilled in infection control and are implementing best practices for minimizing spread of germs/illness. Nurses are also monitoring the type and number of illnesses presenting, to determine patterns and additional steps warranted.

**Preparing for Possible School Closures:** The district has been working with teachers and administrators to develop a series of plans in the event that local health agencies and the State of Connecticut deem closing of schools necessary. In the next several days, students will receive packets and materials of cross curricular school work, which should be completed by students if schools are closed. For your information, we have chosen to use print rather than computer-based materials at this time to ensure every student has equitable access.

Our library/media center policies will be loosened to ensure students have the opportunity to borrow more than the usual number of books.

**School Meals:** One of our big concerns, in the event of school closures, is making food available to our students that depend on it. We are currently exploring waivers and other options to best ensure students who participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program have food available to them in the event schools are closed for an extended period of time.

As this is an evolving situation, communication is particularly important during this time. We will continue to use telephone messaging, our Websites, social media and other vehicles to provide information and updates to our families.

We will continue to monitor the situation, with guidance from QVHD, the State of Connecticut and CDC. If you have questions about Coronavirus (CoVid-19), you can do the following:

- Call 211 or text CTCOVID to 898211 with your questions
- Visit the QVHD Coronavirus Website <http://www.qvhd.org/corona-virus-preparedness>
- Read the CDC factsheet on Coronavirus: <http://www.qvhd.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>
- Visit the CDC Coronavirus Website

The uncertainty and media reports related to Coronavirus make this a particularly challenging time for all of us. You have my commitment to keeping you updated on school-related issues and in doing all we can to ensure the health and well-being of our students and staff. I appreciate your support and understanding.

Sincerely,

Jody Ian Goeler

Superintendent