

March 12, 2020

Dear Families:

Paul Cuffee School is contacting you today with some important information about COVID-19, or the coronavirus, and the responsibilities we all have to reduce the risk and spread of illness. The School has updated its emergency operation plan, and there are responsibilities that we expect from all students and families.

Currently, as indicated by the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) and its team from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and in coordination with RI Department of Education (RIDE) and the Office of Governor Raimondo, Rhode Island is still at low risk for transmission of COVID-19. Still, there is a lot you will need to know about COVID-19. Please visit the Department of Health's website for guidance at: <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/> or call 401-222-8022 for more information.

Although the risk for transmission is currently low, there is much that we can and will do to prevent the spread of illness. Our emergency operation plan includes updated protocols for protective measures including hygiene, sanitation, disinfection, and cleaning. We are also reducing the frequency of gatherings and limiting the number of attendees at our events. Staff will begin surveying visitors for illness, so please be prepared to be asked if you're sick or have traveled when visiting the school.

We need you to do your part, too. Do not send children to school who are sick, please. If you do that when your child has symptoms of the illness then you put our entire community at risk. Update your contact information, please. There is a form you can expect to receive tomorrow so that you can check and make sure all of your emergency contacts have been updated.

For students and families that are traveling or planning to travel, you need to notify and contact the School. Prior to returning to school, we need to know the date you will return and students need to be checked for symptoms before returning to school. If your child is showing any sign of illness (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, exhaustion), or if you are planning to travel or have traveled to a high risk country, then please check your child for symptoms to prevent the spread of illness.

We will be checking all children for symptoms, especially those who have traveled. If anyone has contact with someone who has been diagnosed with the coronavirus you need to report it immediately to Paul Cuffee School's school nurse teacher, and follow your medical care provider's guidance before returning to school.

There are many respiratory illnesses circulating in Rhode Island, such as the flu and the common cold. Having respiratory symptoms does not mean that you have COVID-19. People

are at higher risk for COVID-19 if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath) AND if they were a contact of a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 (or have traveled to [country with community transmission](#)).

If a student has been staying home due to an illness and continues to be sick, please contact your medical care provider and he or she will tell you what to do. Students who are sick must remain at home until they are free of symptoms. Do not send your child to school until they are feeling better. As always, students must be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of tylenol or ibuprofen before returning to school. There should be no vomiting, diarrhea, or cough that would disrupt classroom learning.

We should all be reminded that the best way to reduce the spread of illness is to stay home when you're sick; avoid contact with people who are sick; get a flu shot; wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer if you cannot wash hands; avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, and mouth; cough or sneeze into your sleeve if tissue isn't available.

The RIDOH is not advising closing of schools, but in the event of school closure the School will be providing a virtual learning plan where coursework may be completed at home. Additionally, we are making decisions about field trips on a case-by-case basis.

I want to thank everyone in our school community for doing their part in helping to reduce the spread of illness. Our administrative team has taken great effort in updating our emergency operation plan, and our teachers and support staff are prepared to provide the best learning environment possible in ways that help reduce the spread of illness.

In closing, I encourage you to further your knowledge about COVID-19 by visiting the website <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/> .

Sincerely,

Christopher Haskins
Head of School