

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
**SUSSEX-WANTAGE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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March 6, 2020

Dear Sussex-Wantage Families,

I am writing to update you that the Sussex-Wantage Regional School District is continuing to monitor alerts and information provided by the New Jersey Department of Education, New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in regard to *Novel Coronavirus* (COVID-19). I would like to emphasize that this letter continues to be proactive in nature with the goal of keeping you informed and fostering a mindset of ***preparedness, not panic***. We do not have reported cases of COVID-19 in our schools.

The NJDOH and CDC report that, at this time, the health risk to the general public for COVID-19 remains low. However, they are recommending that districts refine their processes to be prepared to implement a public health-related school closure in the event schools in the state need to close as a preventative measure. In the past, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) did not permit home instruction or online schooling as a replacement for the mandated requirement of 180 days of school per year. However, that changed yesterday as the NJDOE decided to allow that option in the event that it becomes necessary. In order for the closure to count toward the requirement, districts will need to be ***directed to close*** by the local health officer or NJDOH. In that regard, faculty and staff will work to refine our plans in this area to ensure equitable access or alternatives for students who do not have access to digital devices. In the event we do receive a directive to close school, you should anticipate being notified via our Instant Alert Honeywell Phone Call system as we do with inclement weather days.

I also want to make you aware that we are continuing to proactively address concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19 as well as seasonal cold and flu. These proactive measures include:

- Our Director of Facilities is monitoring the enhancement of our cleaning routines and frequency
- Collaborating with local and state resources to receive and disseminate information as appropriate
- Students and staff are being reminded to use healthy practices such as frequent hand washing and to cover sneezes and coughs

- We remain in close communication with the Sussex County Department of Health, Office of Emergency Management, and monitor guidelines received from the CDC and the New Jersey Department of Health
- We have brought on additional custodial staff to assist with cleaning; in particular, technology devices
- We have ordered extra cleaning supplies and are installing additional hand sanitizing stations throughout our schools.

Students should continue to be reminded that staying home when they are ill is a good practice. We continue to ask that any family or staff who have traveled to an area or region impacted by COVID-19 should seek the medical advice of their physician. Please refer to the CDC website to monitor travel advisories. They should notify the school nurse of their travel if their physician recommends it. In order to keep students, faculty, and staff safe while at school we will continue to keep you informed as necessary. At this juncture your children may have questions about COVID-19 and you may choose to have conversations with them about it. In that regard, please review the link below from the National Association of School Nurses to see if you find it meaningful.

**National Association of School Nurses:** *Talking to Children about COVID-19; A Parent Resource*

[https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020\\_NASP\\_NASN\\_COVID-19\\_parent\\_handout.pdf](https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020_NASP_NASN_COVID-19_parent_handout.pdf)

Please refer to the following resources for additional information:

- [www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml)
- <https://www.sussex.nj.us/cn/webpage.cfm?tpid=17089>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Sincerely,

Michael Gall  
Superintendent  
Sussex-Wantage Regional School District