

Dear SPS Parents and Guardians,

We were notified late this afternoon of a presumptive positive case of COVID-19 in Somerville which involved a parent of a West Somerville Neighborhood School student and the spouse of a teacher at the WSNS. At approximately 6:15pm, the state Department of Health notified the City of Somerville's Health Department of another presumptive positive case, this time of a parent of a student at the East Somerville Community School. The WSNS teacher and both students are asymptomatic, but all will be self-quarantining in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MPDH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. The Somerville Board of Health was informed of a third presumptive positive case in a male Somerville resident. All three cases appear to be related to the Biogen conference held in Boston in February. The City will share more information on this case as it becomes available.

Given this quickly evolving situation and the need to take every precaution possible, we will be closing all schools and district buildings for the next two days to allow time for the Somerville Department of Public Works (DPW) to conduct a deep and thorough cleaning of all of our schools and district buildings. DPW will be utilizing new equipment that allows them to thoroughly clean and sanitize the buildings overnight, but the extent of our cleaning efforts necessitates closing schools and buildings for the rest of this week. Further communication from the district will go out over the weekend regarding next week's school schedule. As per Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines, the days will be added at the end of the school calendar year.

The City and Schools have activated our joint Emergency Response Team, which has been working in coordination with MA DPH and other State, regional, and community partners on a rapidly evolving response to COVID-19. The CDC offers the following guidance for how COVID-19 spreads: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>. The schools and City also announced new [social distancing measures](#) posted to the city website at www.somervillema.gov/coronavirus. The measures modify and in some cases suspend certain City- and School- sponsored or permitted events, sports, and meeting activities effective immediately, as an additional precaution. We would also like to remind you of important steps you can take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay home when you are sick, and especially if you are coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Practice social distancing. Examples of social distancing include not attending large events like concerts or sports games, avoiding shaking hands or hugging, remaining at least six feet away from others and especially anyone who is coughing or sneezing, and allowing employees to work from home or teleconference.
- Wash your hands often, using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer until soap and water are available.
- Cough/sneeze into a tissue. Dispose of used tissues immediately into a trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough/sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that you touch frequently such as doorknobs, railings, sink handles, phones, and computer keyboards.

Thank you.

Mary E. Skipper, Superintendent