



# Somerville Public Schools

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Dear Somerville Public Schools Families and Staff,

We understand that families and staff have questions regarding the [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) and how it may impact our local community. Although the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to report that the immediate risk to the general public remains low at this time, we are encouraging families to be particularly vigilant in taking some general precautions to remain as healthy as possible.

We are also taking extra precautions such as conducting additional cleaning in each of our schools, and planning for a range of situations as well as reviewing our Emergency Operations Plans. We will continue to work closely with Somerville Health and Human Services and other city departments on monitoring the Coronavirus situation. Please visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) for updates and recommendations from the CDC. In addition, we encourage you to visit the City of Somerville's Novel Coronavirus Preparedness and Information website for health and emergency preparedness recommendations: <https://www.somervillema.gov/coronavirus>.

The following everyday actions can help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, as much as possible.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid sharing drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, dishes, towels, or other items. Wash these items thoroughly with soap and water after use.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- [Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds](#), especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Practice other good health habits: Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

It is important to keep children home from school when they are ill. If your child has any of the following symptoms please keep them home from school:

- Temperature greater than 100.4
- Coughing
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Any rash not yet diagnosed by a physician
- Red or pink itchy eye, and/or drainage from eye
- Any contagious illness such as chicken pox, strep throat or flu.

Contact the school nurse if you are unsure whether your child should attend school or stay home. A student with a fever should remain home for at least 24 hours after the fever has resolved **without** use of medication.

We cannot underscore how important frequent and thorough hand-washing is to helping prevent the spread of this and other respiratory diseases. We will be reinforcing this message with students and staff on a daily basis and appreciate your assistance in modeling and sharing this important practice at home as well. The CDC offers a good video resource for proper and thorough hand-washing techniques:

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>.

It is also important to stay compassionate and know the [facts about COVID-19](#). There have been reports of incidents of discrimination against persons of Asian backgrounds in response to COVID-19 news. Viruses do not discriminate. Our community is grounded in our values of welcoming and inclusion, and we are stronger as a community when we stay true to those values.

As the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation continues to evolve, we will keep you informed. We are deeply committed to the health and wellness of our students and staff and are following all recommended guidelines to ensure that our schools remain a safe and healthy place for all.

Sincerely,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent