

March 5, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

While the Erie 1 BOCES does not have a confirmed case of COVID-19, caused by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) in our schools, we are aware of concerns in the community about the spread of this relatively new virus.

The district is closely monitoring this fluid situation and following guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Erie County Department of Health and the New York State Education Department.

If the district becomes aware that a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, it will immediately notify staff and parents/guardians. If a student or staff member shows respiratory symptoms, we will follow our current practices for handling respiratory illnesses, subject to any additional guidance forthcoming.

The district has infectious disease protocols in place and has been taking steps, such as cleaning and disinfecting throughout its schools, to minimize the spread of viruses and a variety of other illnesses.

There are a number of steps that students, staff and community members can take to minimize the spread of all respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, according to the state Department of Health:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Heavily soiled hands should be washed.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you or a family member begin showing symptoms of a respiratory disease and suspect it may be COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider. Before going to your healthcare provider's office, inform them that a case of COVID-19 is suspected, and follow their advice.

Local health departments will contact schools if a suspected or known COVID-19 case emerges. The district is prepared to work with any affected families.

Families are also encouraged to follow the CDC's information for travel, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

For more information, consider consulting these additional resources:

- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) at <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>
- Travel: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/faqs.html>
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- COVID-19: What is Stigma and What Causes It? [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fstigma-faq.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fstigma-faq.html)
- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - Frequently Asked Questions - Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#prevention>
- Prevention, Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

In addition, New York has established a Novel Coronavirus Hotline, which can provide additional information. Call 1-888-364-3065 with questions or concerns about travel and symptoms.

The district will continue to share information as it becomes available.

Please know that, as always, the health and safety of our students and staff is our highest priority, and we will remain vigilant in our efforts to help prevent the spread of this illness.

Sincerely,

*Michael Capuana*

Michael Capuana  
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Erie 1 BOCES