



Dr. Meg Mayo-Brown, Superintendent of Schools

March 20, 2020

Dear Barnstable Public School Community,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well. I am writing to share that additional members of the Barnstable Public School (BPS) community are being tested for the COVID-19 (Coronavirus). We have been informed by staff members at BIS and BUE that they have undergone testing for COVID-19. This new information means that staff from the following schools have undergone testing for COVID-19: BCIS (3 staff), BHS (1 staff), BIS (2 staff), BUE (1 staff), WVE (1 student, 1 staff). The new information about BUE and BIS means that five of our nine schools have individuals who have undergone testing. We have not received results for any of those individuals with the exception of the confirmed case for the staff member at BCIS. At this time, there remains one confirmed case for Barnstable Public Schools.

I remain committed to informing our community of confirmed cases within Barnstable Public Schools. Due to the opening of the testing center, we anticipate a significant increase in individuals who will seek testing. At some point, BPS staff and students seeking testing may exceed our capacity to inform our BPS community. I want to prepare our BPS community for the time when I won't be able to alert you each time we become aware of BPS individuals seeking testing. Rather, our Coordinator of Nursing and Wellness, Pam Ciborowski, and I want to encourage our school community to continue to practice social distancing. COVID-19 is here and the best way to reduce spread is to stay home as much as possible. In other words, **the best strategy is to self-quarantine.**

Also, **I need to ask for the help of our BPS community.** I have received many calls and emails that kids are congregating on playgrounds and athletic fields. The closure of school applies to school playgrounds and fields. While COVID-19 may not *appear* to significantly impact school age children, we do understand that children can have the virus and be without symptoms. If we are to "flatten the curve" and reduce the burden on our healthcare system - and save lives - then as educators, staff and parents, **we can help by insisting that children and adolescents do not play/gather together for the next two weeks.** We are asking a great deal of our families, but it is extremely important. Our medical experts are imploring us to hear their advice and reduce all social contact.

We are grateful for our community's support of our students and staff. We miss our students and the regular routine of school. We look forward to continuing learning in the days to come when we launch our BPS learning plan. Thank you for your patience while we finalize details that seek to continue learning and supporting our students in this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Meg Mayo-Brown, Superintendent of Schools

## What are Social-Distancing Strategies?

(The following recommendations are excerpts from <https://www.ariadnelabs.org/resources/articles/news/social-distancing-this-is-not-a-snow-day/>) **Social distancing is a critical strategy in order to reduce community spread of COVID-19**

### **No kid playdates, parties, sleepovers, or families/friends visiting each other's houses and apartments.**

This sounds extreme because it is. It may be particularly uncomfortable for families with small children, children with differential abilities or challenges, and for children who simply love to play with their friends. But even if you choose only one friend to have over, you are creating new links and possibilities for the type of transmission that all of our school/work/public event closures are trying to prevent. The symptoms of coronavirus take four to five days to manifest themselves. Someone who comes over looking well can transmit the virus.

### **Take care of yourself and your family, but maintain social distance.**

Exercise, take walks/runs outside, and stay connected through phone, video, and other social media. But when you go outside, do your best to maintain at least six feet between you and non-family members. If you have children, try not to use public facilities like playground structures, as coronavirus can live on plastic and metal for up to nine days.

The CDC offers tips and resources to reduce this burden, and other resources offer strategies to cope with the added stress during this time. The [CDC offers tips and resources](#) to reduce this burden, and other [resources offer strategies to cope](#) with the added stress during this time.

### **Reduce the frequency of going to stores, restaurants, and coffee shops for the time being.**

Of course trips to the grocery store will be necessary, but try to limit them and go at times when they are less busy. Remember to wash your hands thoroughly before and after your trip. And leave the medical masks and gloves for the medical professionals—they are needed to care for those who are sick. Maintain distance from others while shopping.

### **If you are sick, isolate yourself, stay home, and contact a medical professional.**

If you are sick, you should try to isolate yourself from the rest of your family within your residence as best as you can. If you have questions about whether you qualify or should get a coronavirus test, you can call your primary care team. Of course, in a medical emergency, call 911.

## What does it mean to Self-Quarantine?

- Stay home from work, school, and away from other public places until the self-quarantine period is over. All activities outside of your home are restricted, except for getting medical care.
- If you develop symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), call your healthcare provider immediately for instructions, and let them know you have been on self-quarantine for possible exposure.
- For medical emergencies, call 911 and notify the dispatch personnel that you have been on self-quarantine for possible COVID-19.
- Always practice good health hygiene including:
  - Covering your cough and sneezes.
  - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. If available, use a separate bathroom.
- Avoid sharing personal items with other people in your household, such as dishes, towels, and bedding.
- Clean all surfaces that are touched often, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, phones, keyboards, remote controls.