



Dr. Meg Mayo-Brown, Superintendent of Schools

March 17, 2020

Dear Barnstable Public School Community,

In an effort to honor our commitment to transparency and information sharing, I am writing to share that additional members of the Barnstable Public School Community are being tested for the COVID-19 (Coronavirus). At this time a student at West Villages Elementary School, and a staff member at Barnstable High School, who are symptomatic and in self-quarantine, are being tested for COVID-19. We have sent specific communications to those school communities and will provide updates as necessary.

All Barnstable Public Schools are closed until, at least, April 7, 2020 and will undergo deep cleaning beginning next week. Barnstable Community Innovation School and West Villages Elementary School are closed to all staff, and will undergo deep cleaning this week. Barnstable Public Schools continues to post COVID-19 updates and resources on our website at <https://www.barnstable.k12.ma.us/Page/4864>. We are in regular communication with the MA Department of Public Health, the Director of Public Health for the Town of Barnstable, and our school physician, Dr. Katie Rudman.

We are also requesting that any BPS educator, staff, or parent/guardian who has a BPS child who undergoes testing for COVID-19 reach out, confidentially, to Pam Ciborowski, Coordinator for Nursing and Wellness (ciborowski_pam@mybps.us). This is particularly important for our staff members who live outside the Town of Barnstable, as this information will facilitate Pam's efforts to coordinate with the various local boards of health.

I want to remind our entire BPS community the critical importance of social distancing. We know that it is difficult for children to be away from their friends and extended family, but it is the only reliable way to slow the spread and protect all of our vulnerable community members. I have attached two resources to this letter, both have been previously sent, regarding strategies for social distancing and self-quarantine. Additionally, there is a new resource from the state: **MASS211: www.mass211.org or #Call2Talk or Dial 211 24/7 for information and referrals to local resources, including public's questions on COVID-19 – multi-lingual, confidential and free.**

It is important to emphasize our commitment to confidentiality. As with any medical issue, we are required to maintain the confidentiality of our staff, students and families at all times. We will not be providing person-specific information regarding reasons for absences, illness and/or travel history. During this difficult time, it is important to respect the privacy of the impacted staff member and their family. Please keep the entire BPS community in your thoughts.

We appreciate our BPS community's patience and understanding as we support our students, staff, and families through these challenging times.

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.