

COVID-19 FAQ's for Parents/Guardians/Staff

Wilmington Public Schools is working closely with the Wilmington Board of Health and the MA Department of Public Health (MDPH) to keep informed about the new coronavirus, COVID-19. Please note the risk of contracting COVID-19 in MA remains low. MA residents are much more likely to become sick with a cold or flu than to be exposed to COVID-19. Many precautions that help prevent the spread of colds and the flu can help protect against other respiratory viruses. The following FAQ's are based on current guidance from MDPH and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE):

Q1: What precautions can Students, Parents/Guardians & Staff take to help prevent colds, flu and other respiratory viruses?

- 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 alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your coughs or sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve (not with your hands)
- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick

Q2: What type of cleaning and disinfecting is being done by custodial staff in the schools?

A: Custodial staff are trained in the use of disinfectants in a safe and effective manner and clean-up of potentially infectious materials and body fluid spills. Routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces (door handles, faucets, railings), bathrooms and health rooms is being performed regularly.

Q3: Are students being educated on Handwashing & Cough Etiquette?

A: School Nurses, Health Teachers, and all Educators are reviewing proper handwashing and cough etiquette with students on a regular basis.

Q4: How are international field trips going to be handled?

A: The MA Governor has requested all high schools suspend international travel for the time being.

Q5: How are local field trips being handled?

A: Local field trips are being closely monitored on a case-by-case circumstance

Q6: Will group gatherings, such as evening events or school sports, or school be cancelled?

A: For health and safety reasons, WPS is supporting the governor's recommendation to postpone, cancel or restructure events. We are cancelling public gatherings that are large in nature. WPS has not received any guidance with respect to cancelling school sporting events. WPS

administrators are working closely with the Wilmington Board of Health and the MA Department of Public Health and will determine whether or not to implement any school cancelations. These types of decisions will be based on information as it becomes available.

Q7: *When should I stay home, keep my child home or seek medical attention?*

A: If you or your child is ill with COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing or other associated symptoms), please stay home from work or keep your child home from school and call you/your child's PCP for direction.

Q8: *Will parents/guardians/staff be notified if there's a case of COVID-19 in the schools?*

A: *Parents/guardians/Staff will be notified by the school department if there are confirmed or presumptive cases of COVID-19 in the schools. Each case will be reviewed individually to determine whether or not additional steps are necessary.*

Q9: *How do I talk to my child about COVID-19?*

- **Simple reassurance.** Remind children that researchers and doctors are learning as much as they can, as quickly as they can, about the virus and are taking steps to keep everyone safe.
- **Give them control.** It's also a great time to remind your children of what they can do to help – washing their hands often, coughing into a tissue or their sleeves, and getting enough sleep.
- **Watch for signs of anxiety.** Children may not have the words to express their worry, but you may see signs of it. They may get cranky, be more clingy, have trouble sleeping, or seem distracted. Keep the reassurance going and try to stick to your normal routines.
- **Monitor their media.** Keep young children away from frightening images they may see on TV, social media, computers, etc. For older children, talk together about what they are hearing on the news and correct any misinformation or rumors you may hear.

For more information, please visit [Talking to Children about COVID-19](#)

Q10: *Where can I find more information?*

- Centers for Disease Control website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- MDPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Information for Pregnant individuals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html>

Q11: *Who can I contact for more information or questions?*

- Doreen Crowe, Coordinator of Nursing Services, via email at Doreen.crowe@wpsk12.com or phone at 978-694-6060 x6614
- Shelly Newhouse, Director of Wilmington Board of Health, via email at boh@wilmingtonma.gov or phone at 978-658-4298