

WINDHAM SOUTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

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MEMO

To: WSWSU Community
From: Superintendent Komons-Montroll and WSWSU Task Force
Re: Update
Date: March 11, 2020

Dear WSWSU Community,

Keeping everyone as safe as possible is our priority. This letter is to update you on the latest actions we are taking to decrease exposure to viruses in our schools. All of our actions are in accordance with guidance provided to us from the Vermont Department of Health and the Agency of Education.

WSWSU has formed a COVID-19 task force that includes the superintendent, the operations manager, the principals, the nurses and the curriculum director. This week we identified these practices and are implementing the following actions across our schools.

- All WSWSU school custodians are now disinfecting all high touch surfaces at least one time daily. This includes all door knobs/push bars, touch areas around knobs/bars, and countertops.
- Bus drivers are now having kids sit in the same seats for morning and afternoon trips.
- Bus handrails and seats are disinfected between trips.
- Teachers are teaching students hand hygiene including: to cough in sleeve, not to touch their faces, and handwash.
- Teachers are encouraging students to use water bottles instead of the drinking fountains.
- All persons entering the schools are expected to wash hands or use hand sanitizer, when available.
- All persons are asked that if they have a fever and/or cough and shortness of breath to not enter school buildings.
- All students and staff who have a fever, and/or cough and shortness of breath are asked to not come to school.
- Prominent places will have signs posted to remind people of the above.

As a new measure, we are asking families to report presenting symptoms if their child is to be absent, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, vomiting or a confirmed diagnosis. This information will help inform our planning. Please remember, if your child has a fever and/or a cough and shortness of breath, keep them home.

We understand that many of you are concerned. Should you have questions about your exposure to the virus or questions about what you should do, please call **211**, or the Vermont Department of Health at their main number at **802-863-7240**, or their local numbers: Brattleboro VT Dept. of Health: **802- 257-2880**; Bennington VT Dept. of Health: **802-447-3531**.

What Can You Do?

The CDC emphasizes common disease prevention measures as the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Many of the precautions that help prevent other respiratory diseases, like colds and the flu, can also help keep an illness like COVID-19 from spreading. We recommend that you reinforce these practices at home. Here is a poster from the CDC that contains the most important points:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. 3 minute handwashing video: (CDC) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZw4Ga3ig3E&feature=youtu.be>
- 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 your sleeve or a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

We will continue to follow Vermont Department of Health and Agency of Education guidance to help promote the well being of the WSWSU community, and will communicate when we have more updates. In the meantime, we encourage people to stay informed by checking out the links below.

WSWSU would like to thank all the staff and teachers for being responsive to the health of our students and community. We appreciate the great lengths they are taking to implement precautionary measures. We are also grateful for everyone's support and understanding during this increasingly complex time.

May we all continue to demonstrate care and empathy toward one another as we tackle this unprecedented challenge.

Sincerely,

Barbara Anne Komons-Montroll, Superintendent

WSWSW Task Force

Resources and Definitions

VT Department of Health

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>

CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>

Close Contact: The VT Department of Health issued guidelines on what “close contact” means. “Close contact means being within six feet of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for a long time. This happens when caring for, being intimate partners with, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area. **If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19: stay home, limit contact with others, and call Health Department Epidemiology at 802-863-7240 to discuss whether you need to see a provider and how you will monitor yourself for symptoms.** When someone tests positive for COVID-19, the Health Department conducts outreach to close contacts of the individual.”

“Close contact does not mean: being more than six feet away in the same indoor environment for a long period of time, walking by, or briefly being in the same room with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. In these situations, you should observe yourself for symptoms. You do not need to call the Health Department.”

COVID-19: According to the CDC, COVID-19 is one of 7 corona viruses which explains why it is more accurately referred to as COVID-19 and not coronavirus.

Disinfecting

Cleaning refers to removing soils and dead germs and includes scrubbing, washing and vacuuming. Sanitizing refers to reducing occurrence and growth of bacteria, viruses and fungi.

Disinfecting refers to killing viruses/germs and involves wiping on or spraying on a disinfectant.