

Updated 3/11/2020

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Gardner Public Schools' Efforts to Prevent the Transmission of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

What is the coronavirus?

Although the Coronavirus has existed for decades, this is a new strain called the COVID-19. Similar to the common flu, the symptoms include: fever, dry cough, fatigue, sore throat, headache, shortness of breath, and phlegm production. Older people or those with pre-existing medical conditions (i.e. cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, or diabetes) are at higher risk for severe infection. Please refer to the World Health Organization (www.who.int) or Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) website if you want more information.

What is the district doing to prevent the spread of the coronavirus?

Custodial staff is trained to use disinfectants in a safe and effective manner and to clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluid spills. They are using an EPA-approved disinfectant that is effective against the virus to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (door handles, faucets, railings). This will include all areas of the schools, including classrooms, bathrooms, health rooms, eating areas, and food prep areas. Additionally, our bus and food service vendors are taking extra precautions in accordance with the latest guidance.

Other districts are cancelling school to sanitize their classrooms. Why hasn't Gardner cancelled?

We have not received any information to indicate that anyone in our community is being monitored for novel coronavirus-like symptoms. At this point, we have no reason to disrupt the school day to clean. Our custodial service is already working hard to sanitize all surfaces daily, and our School Nurse Leader is in daily contact with the local Health Department for the latest updates and recommendations from the MA Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Control.

My child has a serious medical condition and I am considering removing them from school until the threat of coronavirus is over. What should I do?

We understand your concerns and please know that your child's well-being and safety is our top priority. While the threat of Coronavirus is low in our district at this time, we understand why you are feeling worried. Feel free to contact our Nurse Leader, Becky McCaffrey, who can discuss this with you. Her number is (978) 632-4158, x1.

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People in the community are traveling internationally all the time. What if one of them is diagnosed?

If someone in our community were to be monitored for possible symptoms, we would be notified by the Department of Public Health, and we would appropriately adjust our response as needed. Gardner Public Schools is canceling all school-sponsored international trips for this year in accordance with the latest guidance.

How are decisions made regarding in-state field trips and school events?

The Nurse Leader and Superintendent are closely monitoring the Coronavirus status of towns and states across the country. Any decisions regarding local field trips or in-school events will be made on a case-by-case basis using the most recent guidance from the Department of Public Health.

My child has a school field trip coming up, but I am worried about the threat of coronavirus. Can they stay at school?

Our students need parental permission to attend any field trip off campus. We will provide alternate activities at school for students who do not attend field trips.

I want to send a bottle of hand sanitizer in with my child for their classroom. Is that all right?

Hand sanitizer is available in our schools, as are soap and water. (The preferred method for cleaning your hands is washing them vigorously with soap and water for 20 seconds.) However, your child is allowed to bring hand sanitizer into school, as long as they use it properly. (We have had small children consume it, which can be dangerous.) Hand sanitizer with 60% or more alcohol content is effective in killing the coronavirus.