



DEXTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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March 11, 2020

Dear DCS Parents and Staff,

We are reaching out to our families and staff with an update regarding the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). DCS is in close communication with the Washtenaw County Health Department and will continue to follow their guidance and recommendations regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. **As of approximately 10:15 pm last night on March 10, 2020, two cases were presumptively confirmed in Michigan: one in Wayne County and one in Oakland County.** Test results were positive at the state lab in Lansing and they are awaiting confirmation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). DCS will continue to monitor CDC guidance and will immediately notify families of any actions we need to put in place based on information from the CDC, Washtenaw County Health Department, and/or the Michigan Department of Education. Information is changing nearly as quickly as we can provide updates. Please be ready for at least one more update this week or possibly even as early as tomorrow.

We want to remind our school community that the best ways to prevent the spread of Coronavirus are the same ways to prevent cold and flu, and include:

- Frequently washing your hands with soap and water.
- Covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home when you are sick.

Please note: *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend the use of facemasks for the general public.*

The safety, health, and well-being of our students, staff, and school community is always our priority. We will continue monitoring the development of COVID-19 and plan accordingly in partnership with local, state, and federal health and government officials.

After consulting with WCHD, we wanted to share some important information to help you assess your risk of COVID-19 as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). While the CDC considers COVID-19 a public health concern based on current information, **the immediate health risk to the general U.S. public is considered low at this time.**

Key information from the CDC:

- The CDC has identified two populations as at higher risk for serious illness with COVID-19: older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease.
- The CDC has designated 3 risk levels related to exposure and recommended steps:

COVID-19 **KNOW YOUR RISK**
If you have no symptoms...

HAD PROLONGED CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE POSITIVE FOR COVID-19	HIGH	*SELF-QUARANTINE & MONITOR
TRAVELED INTERNATIONALLY TO A COUNTRY UNDER CDC LEVEL 3	MEDIUM	*SELF-QUARANTINE & MONITOR
TRAVELED DOMESTICALLY TO AN AREA WITH KNOWN COMMUNITY-SPREAD	MEDIUM	*SELF-OBSERVATION
SPENT TIME INDOORS (NO CLOSE CONTACT) WITH SOMEONE POSITIVE FOR COVID-19	LOW	*SELF-OBSERVATION

- “Known community spread” refers to when it is impossible to trace how cases originated (i.e. no known travel exposure) and are most likely spread person-to-person. Isolation/quarantine are strategies used to mitigate community spread.
- If you show symptoms of coughing, shortness of breath, or fever/high temperature **AND** you are in one of the low, medium or high risk COVID-19 categories, contact your health care provider or the Washtenaw County Health Department to determine next steps.

Below is a summary of frequently asked questions and our answers based on the information we have available at the time of this letter.

Q. What are the guidelines for when to keep a child at home from school?

From our Parent-Student Handbook:

- Temperature Greater than 100°: Your child should be fever free (without being medicated) for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Rash: Check with a doctor before bringing a child to school with a rash.
- Vomiting: A child may return to school after s/he has not thrown up for 24 hours and is back on a regular diet.
- Diarrhea: A child who has a loose stool more than one time in 24 hours, should stay home. S/he may return to school after being diarrhea free for 24 hours.
- Cough/Cold: A child with a severe or frequent cough and a runny nose is likely not to feel well enough to concentrate sufficiently on learning. S/he would benefit from more rest and fluids at home.
- Doctor Recommendation: If a child has been prescribed an antibiotic, check with the doctor to see if the child needs to be on medication 24 hours prior to returning to school.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/When-to-Keep-Your-Child-Home-from-Child-Care.aspx>

Q. DCS has multiple student trips planned in the coming weeks and/or months. What is the plan and timeline for any cancelations?

Spring Break Band and Orchestra trips have received updates from Dr. Moore and Mr. Deloria. DCS will provide additional guidance and an update to parents during the week of March 16th based on the information we have available at that time. Meanwhile, we have been in constant communication with vendors who manage our trips in order to explore options in the best interest of our students and families.

For trips scheduled after Spring Break, DCS will provide information to parents after we return from Spring Break.

Q. DCS has multiple large group events scheduled in coming weeks and/or months. What is the plan and timeline for any cancelations?

We are reviewing the list of events and will send notice of any cancelations as soon as the decision is made. Student safety is our top priority and we continue to monitor guidance from the CDC, MDE, and the Health Department. We will always make the best decision we can given the information we have available.

Q. What guidance can DCS provide for families traveling over Spring Break?

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our schools, DCS expects that anyone traveling to a region currently identified by the CDC as a COVID-19 risk, to strictly adhere to the CDC's Travel Advisory information.

The Washtenaw County Health Department recommends that families conduct a risk assessment by asking themselves a few key questions before traveling:

- If you have a vacation planned, have you reviewed the level of risk at the location to which you are travelling to? See the CDC's risk assessment [by country](#) and [by state](#), and [see their travel FAQ here](#).
- If you are planning to go on your vacation, would you and your family be able to self-quarantine for up to 14 days after your return if necessary? What kind of planning would you need to do for work? School? Food and other essential items?

Q. How do I communicate with my children regarding COVID-19?

Attached is a document to help parents communicate with their children regarding COVID-19.

Q. What preventive measures has DCS taken to protect our students and staff from COVID-19?

In partnership with WCHD, we are reviewing preventative measures and we are also assessing and planning for potential impacts on DCS district operations, such as instruction, home visiting services, finance and payroll, technology, facilities, and more.

Here are ways DCS is currently taking action in service of our students and families, staff, and local districts:

- Increasing signage in restrooms, kitchens, staff lounges, and other areas reminding staff, students and visitors to wash their hands frequently.
- Added Hand Sanitizer units at each student restroom.
- Our Facilities staff inspected every faucet in the district last week to ensure they are all operational and are conducting repairs on any defective units. Meanwhile, we replaced nearly \$170,000 worth of faucets at DHS two summers ago as part of our bond work.

- DCS Facilities is directing their staff and our custodial vendors to increase frequency of cleaning protocols, including disinfecting high-touch surfaces like tables and doorknobs, and stocking antibacterial hand soap and hand sanitizer in our facilities. *(Please note that antibacterial wipes, soap and hand sanitizer supplies have become drastically limited among our vendors and local stores, and we continue to seek out alternative supply channels.)*
- Reviewing critical staff positions necessary to core operations.

Thank you for your patience and trust in Dexter Community Schools. This is an unprecedented situation in many of our lifetimes and we will continue to make the best decisions given the information we have available. Please stay alert for further updates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher J. Timmis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher Timmis, Ed.D.
Superintendent