

**Notification 3/11/20**



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Since my last communication, much has changed regarding the recommendations for preparing to limit the exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19). Town officials and superintendents across the state participated in a conference call with Governor Ned Lamont, Department of Health Commissioner Renee Coleman-Mitchell and Commissioner of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona, to discuss implications and recommendations for minimizing the likelihood of contracting Coronavirus (COVID-19). At this time, we are following the recommendations of Connecticut state officials and enacting the following measures moving forward to minimize risk to our students, staff, and the Berlin community.

**Cleaning/Health and Safety Protocols:**

- As of Friday, March 6, custodians began using bleach as a cleaning agent which has been authorized for use.
- We are enacting additional protocols to clean and disinfect the schools.
- Please note that it is impossible to sanitize areas such as playground equipment. Children will be given frequent opportunities to wash their hands, particularly before lunch and after recess periods.

**At Home Learning:**

- At this time, the Governor and Commissioner of Education are not recommending distance learning due to concerns with equity and access; therefore, I will not be asking teachers to make plans to continue daily instruction during a school closure.
- At the elementary level, teachers will be sending home packets to provide materials to support skill maintenance. In addition, resources to support learning will be posted on the district website.
- At the middle school and high school, teachers will post materials in Schoology to support skill maintenance and to provide opportunities to extend learning.

**School Calendar:**

- If school is closed for a period of time, we would need to consider a number of options, which may include makeup days during April vacation or in June, or other calendar adjustments.

- The high school graduation date remains on June 21. The last day of school for all other students is currently scheduled for Wednesday, June 17.
- Given the uncertainty about the end of the school year, families should give consideration to not making travel plans prior to June 30, 2020.
- Parents are encouraged to plan childcare arrangements should schools be closed for an extended period of time.

**Field Trips/Sports/Other Events and Programs:**

- On Tuesday, March 9, the CIAC canceled all upcoming winter sports tournaments.
- All field trips scheduled through March 31 have been canceled or will be postponed.
- To limit disruption to planned events, we are canceling or rescheduling activities on a rolling basis. To that end, all extra-curricular activities scheduled to take place before March 31 that involve large groups of over 100 people have been canceled. It is possible that some of these activities will be rescheduled.
- Building principals will be communicating decisions regarding the cancellation of events involving their students or parents. School website calendars will be updated with these changes in the next few days.
- Out of the country travel has been canceled.
- The McGee trip to Washington, DC, in June has NOT been canceled at this time. We will make a decision by March 20 regarding this trip.
- YMCA before and after school programming is not affected at this time.

**Visitors/Limiting Exposure:**

- We are discontinuing parent/guardian visits to classrooms and the cafeteria until further notice.
- We are reviewing upcoming outside presenters, performances, and conference attendance to limit exposure to the virus.
- We are suspending work-related travel for employees through March 31, including conferences and visits to other schools outside of the district.

**Upcoming Parent/Teacher Conferences:**

- McGee and BHS conferences already scheduled for this week will be held as planned. If you wish to have a phone conference, please contact your child's teacher(s) to make arrangements.
- Elementary conferences have not been impacted at this time. If you wish to have a phone conference, please contact your child's teacher(s) to make arrangements.

**Families Traveling Out of the Country or by Cruise during April Vacation:**

- Families need to make their own decision about travel plans.

- Based on current alerts, those traveling out of the country may have delays upon re-entry, which may result in extended absences for students.
- If you are traveling to any high risk areas, we are requiring you to notify the school nurse so that we can be consistent with all public health advisories.

Thank you all for your cooperation and understanding during this challenging period. I will continue to provide updates as events unfold. Please direct questions to your school principal.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Benigni  
Superintendent of Schools