

**Dept Chancellor Robinson to all principals, ES, Supts, BCOs, etc., w/backpack to families – 02/06/2020**

**From:** Deputy Chancellor Robinson <[DeputyChancellorRobinson@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:DeputyChancellorRobinson@schools.nyc.gov)>

**Date:** February 5, 2020 at 11:43:22 AM EST

**Subject:** [Action Required] Backpack Home Letters on Coronavirus/Guidance on Coronavirus

Dear colleagues,

Recently, a novel (new) coronavirus has been detected in thousands of people in China and over one hundred people in other countries. A "novel coronavirus" is a coronavirus strain that has not been previously found in humans. This novel coronavirus can lead to fever, cough and shortness of breath.

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) is monitoring the outbreak closely and working with our agency partners and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Given the new travel restrictions issued by the federal government, we are providing all schools with updated guidance and an updated letter to send home to families. Recommendations may change as new information becomes available; we will continue to send you updates as they emerge.

There is no need for alarm or to change daily routines in any way. The steps in this guidance are the same as those recommended in cold and flu season.

Please follow the recommendations below:

Per the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), there is no need to cancel local field trips; however, all DOE-sponsored travel to mainland China must be canceled.

**Students and staff with NO recent travel from China:**

Everyone should go about their daily lives and not panic, but practice the same precautions you do during cold and flu season:

- If not already vaccinated - get your flu shot;
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when sneezing or coughing;
- Wash your hands with soap and water often – use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available; and
- Stay home if you have a fever or are feeling sick.

Some students may come to school wearing face masks. The CDC does not recommend the use of face masks among healthy individuals. However, they are permitted. If the face mask becomes a distraction in the classroom or school community, school staff may ask students to remove them.

**Students and school staff with recent travel from China:**

The federal government has issued a requirement for up to 14 days of either mandatory quarantine or home isolation (depending on travel areas in China) for individuals who left China after 5pm EST on

February 2, 2020. This means that those individuals should NOT report to work or school for up to 14 days from the date that they departed China.

Students and staff who left China before 5pm EST on February 2, 2020 and have no symptoms of illness may return to school immediately.

Anyone who left China in the last two weeks and has a fever or cough or shortness of breath should call their medical provider and report their symptoms and travel history. They should not come to school until they have been evaluated by a physician and told they are no longer sick.

For the latest information on the Coronavirus, visit the [Health Department's website](#).

Principals, please backpack home the attached letter from Health Commissioner Barbot with your students today; translated copies will be posted on [the InfoHub](#). Please contact your school nurse or [BCO health director](#) if you have any questions or student-specific health concerns.

With the best public health system in the world, New York City stands ready to respond to any confirmed cases of the coronavirus. We urge all New Yorkers to remain vigilant, and if you or anyone you know matches the criteria and have recently traveled to the affected areas of China, please see a medical professional.

Warm regards,  
LR

**LaShawn Robinson**

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