

## **CRC to ALL STAFF – 3/10/20**

**From:** Chancellor Richard Carranza <NYCChancellor@schools.nyc.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10 2020 12:22 PM

**Subject:** Coronavirus Update (3/10)

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- *Fact Sheet\_COVID-19*

Dear DOE Colleagues,

The DOE continues to aggressively work to keep our students and families safe, healthy, and informed as the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) evolves in New York City. We are writing today with a number of important updates for all employees, including the latest information about ways to protect your health.

### **Staying Up to Date**

To keep you continually up to date, I urge you to visit the [staff information page](#) we have created on the DOE's InfoHub website. It provides daily updates as well as access to important materials, including fact sheets, Q&A documents, and slides prepared for a highly informative webinar with Dr. Daniel Stephens, Deputy Commissioner for Division of Family and Child Health of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). The webinar itself is also available for viewing on the InfoHub page.

- To get regular updates on the latest developments with coronavirus in New York City, text COVID to 692-692. You will receive regular SMS texts with the latest news and developments.
- Please also read the attached [Fact Sheet](#) for more information, and visit [nyc.gov/coronavirus](http://nyc.gov/coronavirus) at any time for important updates, including ways to fight stigma and bias around this issue.

### **Staying Healthy**

It is critical that all New Yorkers continue to practice general viral infection prevention measures including:

- Wash your hands with soap and water often.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead wave or elbow bump.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.
- Get your flu shot – it's never too late.
- Reduce overcrowding by walking or biking to work, if possible.
- If the train is too packed, wait for the next one.

### **If You Feel Sick**

- Stay home and call your doctor if you have symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath, fever, sore throat.
- If you do not feel better in 24-48 hours, contact your doctor.
- Do not go to school or to work until you have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducers like Tylenol or ibuprofen.

- If you need help getting medical care, call 311.

In addition, the [COVID-19 comprehensive checklist](#) includes specific steps to follow for prevention, planning, training, and handling the occurrence of symptoms in students and staff.

#### If You Feel Sick at Work

- If a staff member is sick and complaining of fever, cough or shortness of breath, they should be advised to go home and contact their doctor. Help getting medical care is available by calling 311.
- If the staff member does not feel well enough to go to their doctor on their own, their supervisor should follow established protocols to contact 911 to arrange for ambulance services. In all such cases, the site supervisor or building captain must be notified, and the incident should be logged in OORS.
- The staff member and any adults waiting with the staff member should be provided masks and stay at least 6 feet away from the staff member in the designated isolation room.
- At the moment, there is no reason for any school to call DOHMH to report potential or confirmed cases. DOHMH is receiving information from about positive test results strictly from laboratories. We can support our colleagues at DOHMH by keeping their phones clear to speak with laboratories.

In addition, staff who have underlying chronic conditions - such as heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, cancer, or a compromised immune system, that may make them more at risk for serious illness in the event of exposure - should contact the Division of Human Capital (DHC) at [COVIDtimekeeping@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:COVIDtimekeeping@schools.nyc.gov) or speak to their supervisors to explore accommodations as needed. We will also keep you updated with additional guidance.

#### What if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school?

- In the event that DOHMH determines that there is a need for investigation, closure, or other action at your work location, you will immediately be notified.
- Per the State, if there is a confirmed case in a school, the school must be closed for at least 24 hours while DOHMH investigates and determines whether additional closure is needed. We are working with the State to provide more information on school closure guidance to share in the near future.
- Accurate, up-to-date information will continue to be provided through official communications from DOHMH or DOE. We urge you to ignore any rumor you might hear from others.
- At the moment, there is no reason for any school to call DOHMH to report potential or confirmed cases. DOHMH is receiving information from about positive test results strictly from laboratories. We can support our colleagues at DOHMH by keeping their phones clear to speak with laboratories.

#### Staff Timekeeping and Support

Guidance around staff absences related to coronavirus has been posted on the [Payroll Personnel Memoranda](#) page on the Info Hub.

- For any staff who have been required to self-isolate or quarantine by a health authority, absences will not count against your sick days, and you will be paid for the duration of that time.
- Please continue to visit the [Payroll Personnel Memoranda website](#) to check for updates.

- As a reminder, all staff are required to report and advise supervisors of attendance daily. Daily attendance records are especially critical to plan and respond to COVID-19.
- On March 5, 2020 the NYC Health Commissioner issued an order to require testing and/or quarantine of any DOE school staff who the NYC Health Department determines may present an imminent threat to public health. Additional information can be found in the [Order FAQ](#).
  - **NYC DOHMH will contact school-based staff if testing or quarantine is required.** This is in addition to any other guidance to self-monitor that DOHMH may provide individuals.
  - NYC DOHMH will determine if there is a need for investigation, closure, or other actions and will contact DOE.

### Large Gatherings

- **To date, the City has not advised any cancellations, but is actively monitoring developments and will keep you informed.** If you are sick, stay home.
- If you have chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, a compromised immune system, chronic lung disease, and/or cancer, avoid unnecessary gatherings and events.

### International Travel

At this time, DOE is cancelling all international school trips, including study abroad programs and visits, for the remainder of the school year. All non-essential international travel by City workers has also been cancelled.

- Travelers returning from China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea on or after March 4, 2020 should stay home, monitor their health, and avoid contact with others for 14 days from the time they left the affected country.
- If returning travelers from affected countries develop fever, cough, or trouble breathing, they should call their medical provider and tell them about their symptoms and recent travel.
- DOHMH has developed a supporting doctor's note and FAQ available at [nyc.gov/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/coronavirus) under "Returning Travelers."

Individuals who returned from the affected countries before March 4, 2020 should monitor their health; if they develop any symptoms, they should stay home and call their medical provider. Please monitor [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for updates on affected countries here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>

### Confidential Support

As a reminder, NYCDOE employees and their family members are now eligible for benefits provided by the New York City Employee Assistance Program (NYC EAP), which offers education, information, counseling, and individualized referrals to assist with a wide range of personal and social problems.

- All EAP services are confidential, voluntary and free of charge. All services are delivered by fully credentialed staff under supervision and review by program directors.
- You can reach the NYC EAP by calling (212) 306-7660 or emailing [eap@olr.nyc.gov](mailto:eap@olr.nyc.gov).

### Fighting Bias and Stigma

Please help maintain a respectful workplace by being mindful of your colleagues, your neighbors, and your fellow New Yorkers, and keep everyone's attention on the facts. Rumors can be as dangerous as any virus.

- If you feel you are being harassed due to your national origin, race, ethnicity, actual or perceived immigration status, or other protected status under the Citywide EEO Policy, you can report this to the DOE's Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management at <https://www.nycenet.edu/oeo>

The health and safety of our students and staff continues to be our chief priority, and we will follow all guidance and take all appropriate measures accordingly, proactively communicating to keep you informed at every turn.

In unity,

Richard