

Chancellor's Memo



Dear Colleagues,

We know that New York City's first reported cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) have put many New Yorkers on edge. The health and safety of all of our students and staff members continues to be our first priority, and we are actively working with our partners at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to monitor the situation.

In a time of anxiety, it is up to all of us to encourage everyone in our school communities to listen to facts and not respond to fear. Despite two confirmed cases, health officials have insisted that New Yorkers remain at low risk for contracting the virus.

I want to be clear that I take COVID-19 precautions very seriously—and I am counting on you to do so as well. Your school communities will be looking to you for guidance and information, and I am committed to supporting you in this. To that end, we are enhancing certain protocols and providing additional resources to schools, including:

- Providing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-approved cleaning agents to every school;
- Ensuring all bathrooms are continuously stocked with soap and paper towels, and encouraging students and staff to wash their hands frequently;
- Canceling school-based travel to certain countries based on guidance from the CDC; for more information on this, see the [announcement below](#).
- Ensuring principals and school nurses have the resources and guidance needed to detect and report symptoms exhibited at school, and provide help for anyone affected.

These protocols and resources, along with recommended viral-infection prevention measures and ways that families can get important updates on the virus, are included in the [family letter](#) I shared with you earlier today. If you have not already done so, please backpack home this letter by **March 4**.

We have also prepared [guidance for principals](#) that covers general preparedness, resources, recommended virus-control practices for schools, and more. For additional information on COVID-19, please see the following:

- DOHMH's main [coronavirus page](#);
- DOE's [coronavirus updates](#);
- [Coronavirus FAQ](#) for NYC schools and families; and a
- [General fact sheet](#) on COVID-19.

Again, the health and safety of our students and staff members continues to be our highest priority, and we will follow all guidance and take all appropriate measures accordingly.

Thank you for partnering with us to keep our communities safe, and for taking the lead on communicating this critical information to your families and staff members.

In unity,
Richard

Announcements

International Travel Trip Policy for Schools

School Type: **Elementary, middle, and high schools**

Workflow Subcategory: **Operations General**

Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for international travel, and in consultation with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the DOE is issuing updated guidance on international travel for school trips. Currently, the CDC recommends that travelers avoid, or consider postponing, nonessential travel to the following destinations that have a level-2 or higher advisory alert: China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, and Japan. Accordingly, all DOE-sponsored international trips to these countries are not authorized for the rest of this school year and must be cancelled. The DOE will continue to provide updated information on any additional countries that may be added to this list. In addition, all schools should note the following and take appropriate action:

- The DOE, consistent with guidance from the CDC and NYSED, advises the cancellation of all study abroad programs; this includes where students are scheduled to come from other countries to stay with host families in NYC, and where DOE public school students are hosted abroad. If your school has an exchange program planned for the remainder of the school year, please consult with your superintendent.
- If your school has any trip(s) planned for the current school year to a country not included in the level-2 or higher advisory alert, you may still consider canceling your trip out of an abundance of caution – please consult with your superintendent;
- If your school has any planned trip(s) for the current school year to a country with a level-2 or higher advisory alert, you must cancel the trip and work with the travel vendor to secure reimbursement for trip fees.
 - In instances where vendors will not reimburse or credit the school for future trips, you should notify your superintendent, who will escalate the matter to your BCO director of finance and HR for vendor engagement. Please note that the DOE is limited in its ability to secure funds, particularly in instances where trips were not booked with DOE-contracted vendors.

For specific questions or concerns, email stayinghealthy@schools.nyc.gov.

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