



Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent

The Public Schools of Brookline
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January 28, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

I am writing to share with you the health advisory issued yesterday by Brookline's Public Health Department (please see attached) concerning the coronavirus. I would also like to take this opportunity to let you know the steps we are taking in our schools to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

We are carefully monitoring information from the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as well as advisories from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). As is typical for this time of year, we are seeing influenza-like symptoms in our schools. Nurses are closely monitoring symptoms and reminding parents to keep students home when ill, and to practice good hand-washing and cough etiquette. We also would like to remind you that it is not too late to get the flu vaccine if you have not already done so.

The CDC is conducting screening for illness among passengers at 20 US airports and providing educational materials for any passengers arriving from China. The CDC is closely monitoring this rapidly evolving situation and providing regular updates to public health authorities across the nation. More information about the CDC's response to the coronavirus can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html#cdc-response>

Please rest assured that we are monitoring this situation very closely and staying informed of the latest information from public health authorities. We are following all recommended guidelines to ensure the safety of our students and staff. We will continue to share new information with you, as necessary, about this rapidly evolving situation.

Sincerely,

Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent



**TOWN OF BROOKLINE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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Dr. Swannie Jett, DrPH, MSc
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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January 28, 2020

617-730-2300

HEALTH ADVISORY FOR CORONAVIRUS

BROOKLINE – “We understand that many people are worried about the coronavirus and how it may impact Brookline, MA”, said Dr. Swannie Jett, Health Commissioner for Brookline Public Health (BPH). Brookline is currently at low risk for cases but, we are closely monitoring the situation. When we have further information we will update the public. If you have traveled to China recently and are sick with fever, cough and difficulty breathing please call your primary care physician immediately. “I would avoid any unnecessary travel to China until the outbreak is over”, said Dr. Swannie Jett.

CDC is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (termed “2019-nCoV”) that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and which continues to expand. Chinese health officials have reported hundreds of infections with 2019-nCoV in China, including outside of Hubei Province. A number of countries, including the United States, have been actively screening incoming travelers from Wuhan. Human infections with 2019-nCoV have been confirmed in other countries, including the United States. The United States announced their first infection with 2019-nCoV detected in a traveler returning from Wuhan on January 21, 2020.

Symptoms include fever and respiratory illness, such as cough and difficulty breathing. In severe cases, infection can cause bronchitis, pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. Symptoms of 2019-nCoV may be similar to the flu. Preliminary information suggests that older adults and people with underlying health conditions may be at increased risk for severe complications from this virus.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid exposure to the virus. BPH always recommends standard precautions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Using alcohol-based hand rubs and gels.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Covering your cough or sneeze.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

- Wear a mask if you leave the house and you have a cough

What can travelers do to protect themselves and others?

- Avoid contact with sick people
- Avoid animals, animal markets, and products that come from animals
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Older adults and travelers with underlying health issues may be at risk for more severe disease and should discuss travel to China with their health care provider.

For further information, please contact Dr. Swannie Jett, sjett@brooklinema.gov or 617-730-2300. Also, please join our Twitter discussion: [@BrooklineHealth](https://twitter.com/BrooklineHealth), Facebook: Brookline Department of Public Health, or Instagram: Brooklinehealth.