



**The Public Schools of Brookline**  
Town Hall  
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Brookline, Massachusetts 02445  
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**Ben Lummis**  
Interim Superintendent

February 27, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Many families have raised questions about the global spread of the new coronavirus, COVID-19, and have asked how it might impact our schools.

Yesterday, Public Schools of Brookline leaders met with Dr. Swannie Jett, Brookline's Director of Health and Human Services, and his staff to review guidelines and updates from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). There have been no changes to Brookline's recommendations for self-quarantine for international travelers coming from China since our [last communication on February 5](#).

The immediate risk to Brookline residents from COVID-19 remains low. The town and schools of Brookline are taking all possible measures to ensure that we are prepared and ready for any impact that COVID-19 may have on our community. This includes the following:

- The Town's Department of Public Health stands ready to utilize established protocols and procedures should COVID-19 become prevalent in our community.
- School nurses are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of the COVID-19 virus and the risk categories related to travel history, exposure and symptoms of this virus. They are knowledgeable in infection prevention and control protocols, and have appropriate personal protective equipment. They are trained to provide proper care for any individual who presents with possible symptoms of COVID-19.
- We are reminding staff that if they have a fever or symptoms of illness, they should stay home.
- We are being proactive to ensure that students, families, and educators of Asian ethnicity are not being stigmatized, discriminated against, or treated with prejudice as a result of widely circulating misinformation about COVID-19 in public media and social media.
- We are encouraging teachers to allow students time to wash their hands during the school day.
- We are working to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of cleaners, hand sanitizer, hand soap, and paper towels for use in our schools.

You can help keep our community healthy. The steps that you can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19 will also prevent the spread of all ordinary diseases, like colds, flu, and other viruses. Please encourage all members of your household – including children – to take the following steps:

- Keep your child home if they have a fever or are sick.

- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for 30-40 seconds. Always wash your hands when they are dirty, and after you have used the bathroom, before you eat, and when you blow your nose, cough, or sneeze.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

We encourage all Brookline residents to stay informed. Please learn more about COVID-19 from reputable sources like the CDC and the Brookline Department of Public Health, and avoid sensationalist media sources. Here are some links you may find helpful:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://www.brooklinema.gov/446/Health-Department>

The health of our entire school community remains our highest priority. To that end, please rest assured that we are working closely with Brookline's Public Health Department, regularly and closely monitoring all information from the CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and following all recommended guidelines to ensure the safety of our students and staff. We will continue to share new information with you as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

*Ben Lummis*  
Interim Superintendent

*Casey Ngo-Miller*  
Deputy Superintendent for  
Student Services

*Tricia Laham*  
Coordinator of School  
Health Services