



Ledyard Public Schools

Administrative Offices

March 11, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Ledyard Public Schools is continuing to prepare, adapt and respond to this ever changing public health crisis. The information and guidance we are receiving about coronavirus (COVID-19) is being updated frequently. Yesterday, Governor Lamont announced Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergencies. Though this gives the Governor the ability to take additional actions in the fight against COVID-19, please know that there is no cause for panic.

As I write this message there are NO confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Southeastern Connecticut, but that is expected to change. Ledge Light Health District (LLHD) and local officials are watching for signs that the disease will swell and require expanded social distancing measures such as school closures. Since these measures are very disruptive, they will be implemented based on timely assessment of the evolving situation and the guidance of public health officials. I have been in constant communication with LLHD and CT Department of Health (CDPH) and serve as part of the Ledyard Emergency Management Team.

Our efforts and the precautions we are taking are designed to reduce transmission rates and mitigate this crisis so that our local health care providers are able to appropriately manage care for those in need.

Below are some categorized key points and links to resources from LLHD:

Practice Everyday Preventive Actions Now

Practice and remind others of the importance of using everyday preventive actions that can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue. Throw the tissue in a lined trash container.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles) using a regular household detergent and water.
 - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent and water prior to disinfection. For disinfection, a list of Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA)-approved products is available at [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Fighting Products](#). Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious foods.

Effective Immediately

The following actions have already been or are now being implemented as part of the community mitigation effort led by LLHD:

Enhanced school cleaning

- Disinfection of school buses after morning and afternoon transportation
- Reinforced education of all students about handwashing and preventive measures (age appropriate)
- Updated Pandemic and Continuity of Operations Plan
- Operating with Prepare/Outbreak protocol
- Partnered with LEARN (Regional Education Service Center) to develop extra materials/optional activities that families may utilize to help keep children engaged in the event of a longer term school closure
- Elimination of in-state or out-of-state field trips through April 30, 2020. These will either be cancelled entirely or rescheduled at a later date if at all possible.
- Restructuring, cancellation, or postponement of all non-essential meetings and ancillary gatherings of 100 people or more through April 30, 2020. This would include concerts, plays, and other events.
- Limit or modify non-essential gatherings
- Limitations on events or activities hosted by outside groups on a case by case basis
- Limitations on usage of the buildings by outside groups, in order to allow for appropriate disinfection and cleaning.

- Postponement of parent conferences March 18 & 19. Those dates will remain half days for students to facilitate additional teacher preparation in the event of an extended closure.

We will continue to have conversations about student activity during the school day. At this time we are not modifying school-day activities beyond cancellation of outside presenters/speakers. After school activities will be monitored and evaluated on a case by case basis but are moving forward as planned.

In the Event of an Outbreak in Ledyard Public Schools

- If there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in Ledyard Public Schools, school will be cancelled and notifications will be sent per our Emergency Closing process.
- It is estimated that closures could be as long as two (2) weeks.
- Updates will be provided through the district website, school messenger and social media.
- District resources may be utilized as part of our community response.
- If there is a need for school closures, the State Department of Education recommends adding any missed school days during scheduled breaks or onto the end of the academic year. We are expected to use every other available day to make them up. A waiver could be requested if we cannot meet the required 180 school days by June 30, 2020.

Given the uncertainty of the situation I continue to strongly recommend that parents make appropriate contingency plans should there be an extended closure. If students are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, please stay home and communicate these symptoms to your health care provider and to the school. If any member of your family gets tested for COVID-19, please communicate this information to my Executive Assistant, Pam Najarian (pnajarian@ledyard.net); all information will be kept in strict confidence. If you are traveling out of the state or country over the next 7 weeks, please communicate this information to your child's principal.

Thank you for your support and partnership as we face this challenge.

Sincerely,

Jason Hartling
Superintendent of Schools