

Dear Municipal Administrators, School Superintendents, Directors of Child Care Centers, and University Presidents:

The safety and wellness of our **community** is our number one priority. We will continue to monitor alerts from Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about Coronavirus (COVID-19) within the United States. We also will follow the current guidance posted by the New Jersey Department of Health and the New Jersey Department of Education. Please note, as of today, March 2nd 2020, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey or in our schools.

According to the CDC, while the immediate risk of this respiratory virus to the American public is believed to be low at this time, everyone can do their part to help us respond to this emerging public health situation. Currently there are 86 cases of COVID-19 in the United States between January 1st 2020 and March 2nd 2020 in contrast to over 100,000 seasonal flu cases reported in the same two month time frame.

Since there are no cases in New Jersey, the best prevention is to follow recommended precautions for preventing the flu and viruses as follows:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your sleeve, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Keep your children home when they are sick. **Children should not return to school unless they have been fever-free without medication for 24 hours.**
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Get a flu shot – it's not too late to be protected.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces and objects.

With regard to children of school age the Department of Health recommends that all families with a child who (within the past two weeks) has traveled to an area of the world impacted by COVID-19 contact their child's principal and/or school nurse prior to sending their child back to school. The District and school nurses will refer these cases to the Health Department as they have the jurisdictional responsibility and will work with these families to determine course of action based on the latest CDC and NJ Department of Health CDRSS guidance. Please recommend parents to notify the school district only about their own child/children who have recently traveled to a country impacted by the COVID-19. Discussions about the health concerns of other students are not permitted due to confidentiality restrictions.

As per the NJ Department of Health recommendations schools should follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting using an EPA- registered product.

As part of everyday prevention, it is recommended to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after coughing, sneezing. If soap and water is not available use a hand sanitizer.

The health department will provide weekly updates and guidance to each municipal entity and school district to keep leadership informed of emerging conditions. If you have any questions or require additional information please email Health Officer Mike Fitzpatrick at health@bloomfieldtwpnj.com or if an emergent question 973-713-9504. Thank you for your partnership and cooperation in helping to keep each of our communities safe and healthy.

We have attached the most up to date documents for your reference and dissemination as you find useful. We will continue to monitor and provide new information as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

Michael Fitzpatrick, Health Officer

For the communities of Bloomfield, Caldwell, Chatham Township, Cranford, Glen Ridge, Madison, Mountain Lakes, Springfield.

Distributed by the (Bloomfield Department of Health and Human Services (Compass Public Health Network).