

## MEMORANDUM

To: APS Parents and Guardians

From: Meria Joel Carstarphen, Superintendent

Date: March 9, 2020

Subject: Important Information and Guidance about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The health and wellness of our students and staff in Atlanta Public Schools (APS) is the district's highest priority. APS remains in close communication with the Fulton County Board of Health and other public health officials to make informed operational decisions. As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation continues to evolve, we will follow the guidance from the Department of Public Health (DPH), Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to implement health recommendations and share updated information with APS families as it becomes available.

As of this date, there are no identified cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the district. However, we are continuing to implement proactive measures to minimize risk to students, employees, and families relating to the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Additional guidance regarding prevention, student attendance, enrollment, re-entry of students, field trips and competitions are included below.

### Prevention

There is currently no vaccine to prevent the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases. We are emphasizing the following, important prevention steps for all students and families as recommended by health officials:

- Stay home when you are sick, and keep your children at home when they are sick. As a reminder, students running a fever must stay home from school until they are symptom free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication
- 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 an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 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.

### **Student Attendance**

Students who provide written documentation from their healthcare provider advising them to refrain from attending school due to illness will be fully accommodated in accordance with Board Policy JB. As a reminder, students running a fever must stay home from school until they are symptom free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. If your child's symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulty, please contact your medical provider immediately. Student absences will be marked as excused should your child experience these symptoms. Any questions regarding student attendance due to health related concerns should be directed to Dr. Valencia Hildreth, Comprehensive Health Services Manager at [Valencia.hildreth@apsk12.org](mailto:Valencia.hildreth@apsk12.org) or 404-802-2674.

### **Student Enrollment**

Before enrolling, families of students from countries identified by the CDC as having travel advisories for Coronavirus (COVID-19) and states identified as having community spread (currently Washington, New York and California) should contact Student Assignment via email at [studentassignment@apsk12.org](mailto:studentassignment@apsk12.org) or phone at 404-802-2232. The Department of Student Assignment and Placement staff, in coordination with health services, will work with local and state public health officials to determine the appropriate registration and attendance plan. Next steps and additional guidance will be directly communicated to inquiring families.

### **Re-entry of Students**

Traveling parents and guardians should inform their school registrar by telephone or email if anyone in their household has traveled to areas from countries with travel advisories due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), as identified by the CDC. Upon notification, schools will work with the Department of Student Assignment and Placement, in coordination with health services, to determine the appropriate action regarding re-entry of those children into the school. Next steps and additional guidance will be directly communicated to inquiring families. For up-to-date information about Coronavirus (COVID-19) travel advisories, visit the CDC website here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>. Additionally, for an interactive map of reported Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases, visit the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Center Interactive Map here: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map>.

### **Field Trips**

Given the steadily increasing numbers of reported cases both internationally and in the United States, including Fulton County and elsewhere in Georgia, APS is taking proactive, immediate measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, both within the APS community and beyond. Out of an abundance of caution, all APS-sponsored field trips to international and domestic **out-of-state** locations are cancelled until further notice. For trips that are scheduled, please work with the airline or hotel directly for refunds or credits, if applicable. For **in-state field trips**, the district will proceed with caution. Associate Superintendents, in conjunction with Health Services, will review and monitor all currently scheduled in-state field trip requests for any needed cancellations. All requests for new in-state field trips will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with special attention being placed on trips requiring air travel, events held in closed spaces, or events with 1,000 or more participants. We will continue to monitor updates from CDC, DPH and GADOE and will revisit our guidance for field trips as situations evolve.

### **School Facilities**

Our Facilities Team conducts deep and thorough cleanings of our schools and offices regularly. We are closely monitoring absence levels and reported illnesses and following the guidelines of local and state health agencies, to keep conditions in our schools and workplaces healthy and safe. If warranted, the district is prepared to deploy additional resources to ensure our school environments remain healthy.

### **Athletics, Regional, State, and National Competitions**

APS has not placed restrictions on student participation in Athletics, Regional, State, or National Competitions held within Georgia; however, to ensure that caution is exercised when deemed necessary, the district will continue to work closely with local public health officials. Should athletics, extracurricular, or student competitions be restricted, postponed, or cancelled, parents will be immediately notified.

### **Who to Call**

If you have any additional questions or concerns about the Coronavirus, please contact the following:

- Fulton County Board of Health: <http://fultoncountyboh.org/boh/index.php/about-boh/contact>
- Georgia Department of Public Health: <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact-dph>
- 24/7 Public Health Emergency Line - 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584)

We will continue to update you with important information on the Coronavirus as needed. Thank you for your support and cooperation in helping to keep our students and schools healthy and safe. If you have APS-related questions or comments, please contact us through our *Let's Talk* portal available on our website at <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/>.