

MSAD 08 - VINALHAVEN SCHOOL
School Update on New CDC Announcement of 3-12-20

TO: MSAD 08 Community

Date: March 12, 2020

From: Tonya Arnold, Superintendent

Dear Families,

Safety and health of our students and the community are of utmost importance to us.

We are monitoring notices closely and meeting weekly with local town and emergency officials. The US and all other countries are now considered level 2 for sustained spread on the CDC website. The new information that applies now is as follows:

- Travelers should monitor their health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning from travel.
 - Given this, students should stay home with excused absences when returning from travel out of state or out of the country until it is clear that no symptoms exist.
- Travelers that are sick with fever, cough, or have trouble breathing should stay home and call ahead before seeking medical care.

The newest information from Governor Mills' press conference today states there is 1 presumptive (not yet confirmed) case of COVID19 in Maine.

We will follow the Governor's recommendation of canceling any non-essential gathering of 250 people or more, and not allow community use of our facilities for these types of public gatherings until further notice. Our school population with all staff is less than this number.

- Cancellation of non-essential travel plans to other states and countries are recommended. If a family chooses to travel anyway, they must follow the self-quarantine recommendation for two weeks.

The Governor reports that there is no plan to close schools at this time.

Teaching teams are planning to review the guidance below and figure out in what ways we can plan to follow these recommendations.

Currently, we are operating in column 1 (None to Minimal community transmission).

Factor	Potential mitigation activities according to level of community transmission or impact of COVID-19 by setting		
	None to Minimal	Minimal to moderate	Substantial
Schools/childcare "What childcare facilities, K-12 schools, and colleges and universities can do to prepare for COVID-19, if the school or facility has cases of COVID-19, or if the community is experiencing spread of COVID-19"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know where to find local information on COVID-19 and local trends of COVID-19 cases. • Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if students or staff become symptomatic at school/childcare site. • Review and update emergency operations plan (including implementation of social distancing measures, distance learning if feasible) or develop plan if one is not available. • Evaluate whether there are students or staff who are at increased risk of severe illness and develop plans for them to continue to work or receive educational services if there is moderate levels of COVID-19 transmission or impact. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Parents of children at increased risk for severe illness should discuss with their health care provider whether those students should stay home in case of school or community spread. » Staff at increased risk for severe illness should have a plan to stay home if there are school-based cases or community spread. • Encourage staff and students to stay home when sick and notify school administrators of illness (schools should provide non-punitive sick leave options to allow staff to stay home when ill). • Encourage personal protective measures among staff/students (e.g., stay home when sick, handwashing, respiratory etiquette). • Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. • Ensure hand hygiene supplies are readily available in buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement social distancing measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reduce the frequency of large gatherings (e.g., assemblies), and limit the number of attendees per gathering. » Alter schedules to reduce mixing (e.g., stagger recess, entry/dismissal times) » Limit inter-school interactions » Consider distance or e-learning in some settings • Consider regular health checks (e.g., temperature and respiratory symptom screening) of students, staff, and visitors (if feasible). • Short-term dismissals for school and extracurricular activities as needed (e.g., if cases in staff/students) for cleaning and contact tracing. • Students at increased risk of severe illness should consider implementing individual plans for distance learning, e-learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader and/or longer-term school dismissals, either as a preventive measure or because of staff and/or student absenteeism. • Cancellation of school-associated congregations, particularly those with participation of high-risk individuals. • Implement distance learning if feasible.

Copied from CDC website as of 3-12-20.

We do have cases of Flu B in our community, but this is not as concerning as COVID19. While we should practice the same hygiene and increased cleaning practices to help avoid the spread of Flu B as well, the preventive quarantine is not necessary for the flu. However, sick or symptomatic students and staff should stay home to rest and recover.

Please be sure to call us to report reasons that your child may be absent. Amanda will need to collect information about whether the absence is for a preventive quarantine following travel or if your child is sick. If sick, we need to record which symptoms are present.

Here is a link to the CDC with tips of ways to help promote frequent and thorough hand washing and cleaning with children.

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/handwashing-family.html>

I will plan to send an update weekly, and more frequently if necessary.

Keep calm, and stay kind and clean.