February 4, 2020

Dear Parents,

As you may have seen in the news, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak of a respiratory illness caused by a Novel Coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan, China in December.

The Coronaviruses are a family of viruses and there are different types of coronavirus within that family, much like there are different types of influenza viruses. Coronaviruses in general are not new, they are quite common and are a frequent cause of respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Coronaviruses tend to circulate in the fall and winter months, similar to influenzas.

The New Jersey Department of Health is also working hard by developing guidance and education materials should this new virus impact residents of New Jersey.

While there may be no direct steps that need to be taken with regard to the Coronavirus for the current outbreak, (if no member of the family or close personal contact has traveled to China in the last 2 weeks), here’s a list of preventative measures to take to reduce the spread of respiratory illness:

- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue or into your sleeve, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Keep your child home if they have a fever or are presenting “flu-like” symptoms. Keep them home until they have not had a temperature greater than 100 degrees for at least 24 hours after stopping the use of fever reducing medications such as Tylenol (Acetaminophen) or Advil/Motrin (ibuprofen).

Flu Information and Guidelines:

The flu is a viral infection of the respiratory tract. The symptoms of the flu are as follows:

- A fever, usually in the range of 101-102 but may go as high as 106
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Muscle Aches
- General fatigue and weakness
- Nasal congestion and sneezing
- Headache
- Intestinal symptoms are usually not associated with the flu, but may be present.

When calling your child’s school attendance line, please be sure to state if your child has been diagnosed by the doctor with the flu.

We will continue to monitor the CDC and local public health departments as more information becomes available, we will update you as needed.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joan V. Mast
Superintendent of Schools