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February 28, 2020

Dear Families,

We would like to provide the following information about coronavirus, known as COVID-19, as we know that outbreaks of new virus infections may cause concern and raise questions. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has emphasized that there has been one confirmed case in Massachusetts, and the risk to our students remains low; in fact, it is important to note that our community is more likely to be exposed to cold and/or flu than COVID-19.

Currently, we are receiving frequent updates from the Needham Public Health Department, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, our School Physician, and we are following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. In addition, our school nurses are practicing surveillance at each of the schools, monitoring occurrences of all illnesses and following absenteeism rates.

While the immediate risk of coronaviruses is believed to be low, everyone can help to keep our community healthy by taking the following measures:

- Practicing good hand washing and covering your nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth
- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick
- Keep your student home if ill and communicate that medical information along with any recent travel information to your child's school nurse(s)
- As a reminder, students should stay home per the following Needham Public Schools guidelines:
  - A diagnosis of a communicable disease
  - Fever greater than 100 degrees within the last 24 hours off of fever reducing medication
  - If diagnosed with strep and/or bacterial infection, a student should stay home until a full 24 hours of antibiotic treatment has been completed
  - Vomiting/diarrhea with the last 24 hours; students should be able to consume and tolerate their "typical" diet before returning to school
  - Acute pain that requires relief by narcotic medication
  - An upper respiratory illness with persistent coughing and/or unmanageable nasal discharge
  - An undiagnosed rash

We will continue to work with our public health partners and will communicate any further developments as needed.

Sincerely,

*Barbara Singer*

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