

March 10, 2020

Dear Farmington Families, Faculty and Staff,

I hope this communication finds you well. On behalf of the entire school district, I want to express our appreciation for your partnership, cooperation, and patience as we continue to address the emerging issues related to COVID-19. We appreciate that all members of our school district community are carefully adhering to the CDC, FVHD and DPH expectations and action steps highlighted in the Superintendent's letter dated [March 4, 2020](#).

Although this is an evolving situation that requires flexibility, we are trying to create as much normalcy as possible. As a reminder, if your child is feeling worried or anxious, please refer to resources on our COVID-19 [web page](#) dedicated to sharing resources and information about COVID-19 with our families and community.

Since my last communication, two residents of Connecticut have tested positive for COVID-19. As per the Department of Public Health (DPH), we are moving from containment of COVID-19 to mitigation. This requires the school district to take additional actions recommended by DPH and the Governor's office. Please know we are keeping in close contact with the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD), DPH, Connecticut Department of Education (CSDE), Governor's Office, our Medical Advisor (Dr. Ziogas) and other partners on a regular and in many cases, daily basis.

We remain committed to making balanced decisions with a focus on the safety, health and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and community. Many of the strategies we previously shared with you (e.g., good hygiene habits, ongoing school cleaning, not shaking hands, etc.) are effective, common-sense actions that we all should take to mitigate against the spread of this illness. The additional actions we are taking mirror that approach.

We thought it would be important to provide an update to keep you informed. This update is meant to provide new and emerging expectations to limit the spread of COVID-19.

NEW AND EMERGING ACTION STEPS

Since our last communication, here are some additional action steps the school district has implemented:

- We have **cancelled school-sponsored out-of-state and international travel at FHS** and throughout the district;
- We have provided **detailed faculty and staff guidance** that will be updated regularly;
- We have met with town and regional officials through Farmington's Emergency Management Team for community-wide planning;
- We have set up regular meetings internally as a school district, at schools and town-wide to ensure we are following best practices at the town, district, school and classroom levels;
- We continue to share all information and communications with the FVHD and the Town to keep these partners informed; and
- We are exploring several **social distancing strategies** for during the day operations, especially when large numbers of students are gathering in one location.

The school district participated in a conference call with **Governor Lamont** and the following additional steps will be taken going forward as per recommendations from **DPH**:

- As of today, we will no longer have school events with **over 100 people** or more in attendance until further notice. This applies to events that gather 100 individuals or more into **one area or venue**. We ask for your patience as we begin to cancel, postpone and/or limit event participation. This was an extremely difficult decision because most of these events showcase the accomplishments and hard work of our students, faculty, and staff with support from our families. Please know we are meeting with and supporting students who are most impacted by this decision. This is a social distancing strategy to limit large gatherings of individuals. As much as possible, we will maximize the use of technology to showcase our school events. Please direct questions to your child's school about specific events.
- Similarly, **the CIAC has cancelled all sports** related tournaments at this time. We will continue to stay in contact with the CIAC to provide updates to our school district community. Again, this decision is extremely challenging for our athletes, coaches and school district. Our athletes and coaches have worked tirelessly to reach this level of competition. Please know we are working in collaboration with our coaching staff to support our student athletes as we await next steps from the CIAC.
- We will **no longer have field trips** outside of the school district until further notice. Again, we want to avoid large gatherings of individuals, especially outside of our schools.
- We are **suspending all work related travel for employees** until further notice related to conferences and/or visits to other schools.
- In the event of school closure, we must make up the days through June 30 to reach the **180 day requirement**. The CSDE has provided the opportunity to apply for a waiver which would mean we would not have to make up days that we have missed beyond June 30 in the coming school year. We continue to explore **distance learning** as a potential action step. This would be more viable if the use of distance learning counts toward our 180 day requirement. Please know, this requires a great deal of planning and coordination to ensure all students have access.
- Per the Governor's office, *"If Connecticut experiences widespread sustained community transmission, public safety considerations including extended school closures as a public health prevention measure will be made at the direction of the Office of the Governor with input from Connecticut State Department of Education, Department of Public Health, and Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection."*
- For additional State of Connecticut specific updates and information please visit:
<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus>

OTHER IMPORTANT REMINDERS AND UPDATES

Please keep us informed when you, your child or a family member in your household:

- Becomes aware of exposure to an individual with confirmed COVID-19. Please call your child's school and please also call your physician. We will call the FVHD for guidance in collaboration with the DPH.
- Is returning from a trip from areas highlighted on this CDC website, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Again, this is a best practice to try to limit the spread of COVID-19. This site is updated in real time, so please periodically review this website.
- Experiences [symptoms](#) of illness. Please also call your physician. Again, we will call the FVHD for guidance in collaboration with the DPH.

Communication about the Response to COVID-19 and Other Important Information:

- You should expect regular updates on our website and via email. Urgent messages will be released via email, the FPS App and through text messages.
- Please know that we must adhere to HIPAA and FERPA laws if we have a confirmed case in our community and/or schools to ensure the information we provide is not identifiable.
- We are also mindful that students and all individuals within our school district community should not feel targeted or focused upon related to COVID-19. Although we have not experienced this as a school district, we want to be proactive in treating one another with care and compassion.
- As a proactive approach, we are discussing and planning for the potential of school closures if we experience a wide-spread outbreak and/or we are directed to do so. Please know, we will make all decisions in consultation with the FVHD, DPH, CSDE as well as other key partners.

In challenging times, the Farmington community's spirit of generosity, partnership and care comes shining through, and this has certainly been the case over the past few weeks. I know it will continue to be the case as we proceed through the coming weeks and months.

I thank you for your partnership and patience as we continue to take a measured, yet proactive approach in addressing emerging issues on an ongoing basis. This is an evolving health issue and we plan to keep you informed as new information or decisions are made. Again, all decisions will be made in consultation with the FVHD, DPH and the CSDE as well as other partners.

Please contact your child's school if you have any additional questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kathleen C. Greider
Superintendent