March 5, 2020 4:00 PM

The health and safety of all of our students continues to be our first priority in the wake of the evolving situation around the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in New York City. Today, we continue to urge New Yorkers to continue to listen to facts and not respond to fear.

Preparations and Protocols in Place

We continue to work in close partnership with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to enhance protocols in schools. Here are some of the new communications we have shared with schools:

- DOE has sent principals updated guidance regarding cleaning and travel.
- DOE has shared protocols for handling symptomatic students and staff. For instance, if a student has symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath) while in school, they will be separated from other students and their parents will be notified to pick them up. If a staff member has symptoms, they will be advised to leave work and go to the doctor.
- DOE is communicating with building managers to ensure schools have adequate supplies, such as cleaning materials, soap, and paper towels.
- DOE is sharing additional guidance with schools regarding: identifying private rooms within schools to isolate staff or students who may have symptoms, and advising students and teachers to remain home and contact a doctor if they are sick.

There are no plans to close schools at this time. This is an extreme measure that can be disruptive to day-to-day life, and the decision to implement closures will only be taken at the direction of public health experts.
Guidance for Travelers

Per the CDC recommendations posted on Wednesday, March 4, 2020, all travelers returning from affected countries (currently China, Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea) identified by the CDC should stay home for 14 days from the time they left the affected country, monitor their health, and avoid contact with others. If returning travelers from affected countries develop fever, cough, or trouble breathing, they should call their medical provider and tell them about their symptoms and recent travel.

These recommendations apply to any travelers returning after 12 p.m. on March 4, 2020. Please monitor the CDC.gov website(Open external link) for updates on affected countries.

Important Precautions

As a reminder, it is critical that all New Yorkers continue to practice general viral infection prevention measures including:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve
- Wash your hands regularly
- Avoid touching your face
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Get your flu shot—it’s never too late
- Stay home if you are feeling sick. Call your doctor and let them know your symptoms and travel history.