



EAST LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 220 • East Lyme, Connecticut 06333 • (860) 739-3966 • Fax (860) 739-1215

Jeffrey R. Newton
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Amy Drowne
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March 11, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I recently participated in a conference call with the Governor, State Board of Education, Connecticut Department of Emergency Management, Connecticut Department of Health, Mayors, Town Officials and other Connecticut Superintendents regarding guidance on COVID-19. Based on this call, the Governor and the State Board of Education have provided guidance to all districts in Connecticut regarding this matter. Additionally, the Governor has issued a Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency.

Our primary focus is the safety of all students, staff and families. It is our position that all decisions we make are based first and foremost on that premise. As a district, we are doing all we can to help prevent the spread of germs, and potentially COVID-19, across our schools and community. We are also following and adhering to all recommendations from our public health officials and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The following is information and guidance that the East Lyme Public Schools **will** follow based on current State recommendations:

- If there is a need for school closures, the State Department of Education recommends adding any missed school days onto the end of the academic year and use April vacation to make them up. A waiver could be requested if we cannot meet the required 180 school days prior to June 30, 2020. Currently, there are no plans to close our schools, but this could change at any moment. We are monitoring this virus outbreak by the hour, and are planning for the possibility of a future closing if things get worse across the state or in our region.
- ELPS is canceling and/or postponing large supplemental events (music concerts, plays, family engagement events, etc.) consisting of over 100 people through April 30, 2020. This would not include events such as the upcoming ELHS Spring Fling Dance scheduled for this Friday evening. Since this student dance is not an open community event, but a student event, the dance will proceed as scheduled at this time.
- Per the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) any and all winter sports tournament games are canceled. We await further information pertaining to spring sports and will update parents as information becomes available.
- All student trips that were planned to occur out of the country and out of state have been canceled due to travel concerns and students congregating or visiting highly public areas or locations.

East Lyme Public Schools will inspire, engage and educate each student to become a contributing citizen and a responsible, independent, and critical thinker.



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- All in-state and out-of-state field trips across the district are canceled or postponed until April 30, 2020.

It is our recommendation that parents make back-up plans for childcare in the event of a lengthy district closure. We continue to remind students that handwashing is extremely important and should be done frequently. Additionally, staff are working to provide support and reassurance for children that they are safe in school. Our custodians are diligently continuing to clean surfaces, door handles, etc. to help in avoiding the transmission of germs throughout our buildings.

Here is a direct link to the latest information on the State Department website which will be updated frequently and posted on the East Lyme Public Schools Website: <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus>. We also have direct links and other resources regarding COVID-19 on the website for you to access.

We will keep our parent community apprised of additional updates as we move forward. We appreciate your understanding with the modifications and limits on community events and trips. Let us all hope that COVID-19 is contained across our country and state, and that we will not require additional measures due to a further outbreak.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey R. Newton
Superintendent of Schools

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