



PALMYRA BOARD OF EDUCATION

301 Delaware Avenue • Palmyra, NJ 08065

Brian J. McBride, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Administrative Office
856-786-9300
FAX: 856-829-9638

William R. Blatchley
*Business Administrator/
Board Secretary*

March 13, 2020

Dear Palmyra School District Community,

As an update to my previous letter, I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with new guidance received from the Governor's Office, the Burlington County Health Department, and the NJ Department of Education pertaining to COVID-19. We are working diligently through this pandemic situation to respond on a daily basis to the rapid changes we are facing. Please know that the Burlington County Health Department is doing an outstanding job working with school leaders in our county to provide information about COVID-19 and the efforts taken to identify potential exposure. As of this writing, no student or staff cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Burlington County.

We are now implementing social distancing measures that will limit the frequency of large gatherings and limit the number of attendees at gatherings. These measures are now in effect for the remainder of March and through all of April. A decision to continue with these measures beyond April will be made upon further guidance from the Burlington County Health Department. Our measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Reasonable steps to distance students and reduce collective gathering
- All class trips are postponed
- The PHS senior trip to Florida is postponed
- The Palmyra Players spring musical is postponed
- Events that invite parents and the community in to district facilities are suspended
- Use of district facilities by external organizations is suspended
- Visitors to district facilities will be asked to declare if they have traveled out of the United States recently, and if so may be denied entry based on CDC guidelines
- Regular meetings of the Board of Education will be reviewed

The district continues to take precautions to help reduce seasonal respiratory illnesses and the transmission of COVID-19 by following recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Burlington County Health Department, and the New Jersey Department of Education. Additionally, we are closely monitoring guidance from these organizations to determine the best steps to take in our schools should we experience COVID-19.

Specific steps to clean and disinfect district facilities using appropriate cleaning products are being taken to help reduce the spread of seasonal respiratory illnesses and the transmission of COVID-19. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Floors are wet mopped/vacuumed
- All desks, chairs, tables, and horizontal surfaces are wiped down
- All door handles, light switches, and other routinely used manual accessories and appliances are wiped down

"Education Takes Teamwork"

- All interior windows are cleaned
- Restrooms are cleaned and inspected throughout the day
- Soap dispensers and hand sanitizer dispensers are refilled

To assist our students, district staff provides routine reminders throughout the school day to students about the importance of good personal hygiene and measures that can be taken to help minimize their risk for exposure. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Washing their hands often with soap and water
- Using hand sanitizers
- Covering their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve, not their hands
- Not sharing drinks or food
- Teaching students about COVID-19 and how it is transmitted

I share with you a few steps that you can take to help reduce the spread of viruses in our schools, your home, and our community:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer as directed if soap and water is not available for hand washing.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve, not your hands.
- Stay at home when you are sick; keep sick children at home.
- Remind your children not to share personal items like drinks, food, or unwashed utensils.
- Review and follow CDC travel advisories when you are planning to travel. If you become ill after returning home to the United States, call your healthcare provider.
- Check on your family, neighbors, and especially those that may be the most susceptible to infection, to ensure that they are safe.
- Consider seeking medical attention if you are sick or suspect you may be infected.

In the event the district is mandated to close schools (whether preemptively or reactively) by the Burlington County Health Department or an authorized agency, we are prepared! A Public Health-Related Closure Plan was approved by the Board of Education and submitted to the NJ Department of Education. This plan will help ensure that all students receive instruction so that the school closure counts towards the 180 day requirement. Our teachers are planning and preparing in the event that schools close and instruction must occur at home. Specific details about the plan and instruction are available on our website www.palmyraschools.com.

At this time our schools remain open and students continue to receive instruction and access to clubs and athletics. I encourage you to frequently visit the district's website and our social media platforms, and to speak with your child's teacher or school principal to learn more about our efforts to maintain normal operations and a safe learning environment.

Please accept our appreciation for working with us to keep our students and staff virus free. For more information about COVID-19, visit <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml> or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>

Sincerely,



Dr. Brian J. McBride
Superintendent of Schools

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