



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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February 28th, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We all have seen the rising concern surrounding the novel coronavirus in the news. For weeks, the Health and Safety Task Force from the Archdiocese of New York's Office of the Superintendent of Schools has been in communication with federal, state, and city officials monitoring the situation to ensure the health and safety of our schools and evaluating policies and procedures to keep our students and adults safe. I am reaching out to provide additional information.

You will find an attached letter and *Frequently Asked Questions Guide* from the New York City Department of Health with information about the coronavirus and general flu prevention measures. As this situation evolves and changes, the Task Force will provide further information and guidelines for our Archdiocesan schools.

We encourage all families to practice good hygiene and healthy practices such as washing hands regularly, avoiding close contact with people who are sick, avoiding bringing sick children to school and getting your flu shot to lower the risk of spreading illness.

Effective March 2nd, 2020: For students and school personnel returning from international travel, the following policy for the Archdiocese of New York is in place:

All students and school personnel returning from international travel are required to get written medical clearance from their physician before returning to school. Parents must submit this written medical clearance letter signed and stamped by a licensed physician to the principal.

Be assured we will continue to keep you updated in a timely way.

I thank you for your understanding and help in the effort to keep our schools and students safe. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact your school.

Thank you,

Mr. Michael J. Deegan

Superintendent of Schools

Archdiocese of New York



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

February 26, 2020

Dear Families,

This week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention discussed possible options for what could happen if there is local person-to-person transmission of the novel coronavirus in the United States, including recommendations for school systems to consider.

At this time, it is important to listen to facts and not respond to fear. Currently there are no confirmed cases of novel coronavirus in New York City and the risk to New Yorkers remains low.

However, transmission of the virus in other countries has raised our level of concern, and we are preparing for the possibility of person-to-person transmission in New York City. The measures that are put in place should local person-to-person transmissions begin will depend on the number of individuals affected and the general severity of illness we experience in our city. The NYC Health Department is vigilantly preparing for all possible scenarios, and we will continue to monitor and communicate about any possible impact to our school communities.

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 will be at the direction of public health experts.

All New Yorkers should continue to practice general flu 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're feeling sick. Call your doctor and let them know your symptoms and travel history.

Please read the [Frequently Asked Questions sheet](#) attached to this letter for more information, or visit nyc.gov/health at any time for important updates.

We will continue to clearly communicate with our school communities about our ongoing efforts regarding the coronavirus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oxiris Barbot MD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner
New York City Department of
Health and Mental Hygiene



2019 Novel Coronavirus: Home Self-Monitoring for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in New York City

About 2019 Novel Coronavirus

1. What are coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that are common throughout the world. They cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious illnesses like pneumonia. A novel (new) coronavirus is a type of coronavirus that has not been previously seen in humans.

2. What is 2019 novel coronavirus?

2019 novel coronavirus is a new type of coronavirus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness (which affects breathing) called COVID-19 that was first detected in Wuhan, China. Infections with this new virus have been reported in other regions of China and in some other countries, including the U.S.

3. How serious is this virus and what are the range of symptoms?

Reported symptoms due to infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 have ranged from mild to severe. Symptoms can include fever, cough or shortness of breath.

4. How does this virus spread?

Much is still unknown about how the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads. Current information indicates that person-to-person spread is occurring, but it is not clear how easily the virus spreads between people. Person-to-person spread is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how the flu and other respiratory illnesses spread.

5. How long before symptoms of the virus appear?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear between two and 14 days after exposure.

Guidance for People Required to Home Self-Monitor After Returning from Countries Designated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

6. What is home self-monitoring?

Home self-monitoring means you check yourself for fever and remain alert for cough or shortness of breath. Everyone on home self-monitoring has been provided a plan for whom to contact during the self-monitoring period to determine whether medical evaluation is needed if they develop fever, cough or shortness of breath. People on home self-monitoring are also asked to stay at home and avoid going outside for the entire self-monitoring period. You should not attend work, school, public events or group gatherings. You can get a doctor's note online at nyc.gov/health/coronavirus if you need to provide documentation of your absence to your school or employer.

7. Why do I need to home self-monitor?

To stop the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 in the U.S., all people who spent time in areas designated by the CDC, within the last 14 days, are being screened at the airport for COVID-19 symptoms and risk factors for infection. After this screening:

- Travelers arriving in NYC from CDC-designated areas, who have no symptoms, will be transported to a quarantine location in NYC as directed by the CDC.
- Most travelers returning from CDC-designated areas, who have no symptoms, will be given information about home self-monitoring. They can continue to their destination. Their local health department will then be in contact with the travelers to provide more information.
- Others with possible exposures to the virus that causes COVID-19 may also be asked to home self-monitor by the NYC Health Department.

8. I just got back from a CDC designated country and am supposed to home self-monitor. What do I need to do?

- Take your temperature twice a day.
- Check for symptoms — cough or shortness of breath.
- Stay at home and remain out of public places. Do not go to school or work.
- If you have fever or symptoms, call the NYC Health Department at 347-396-7990.
- You need to do this for 14 days since the day you left the CDC designated country that requires home self-monitoring, even if you spent time in another country before entering the U.S.

9. What about my family members or other people I live with?

If members of your household were not in one of these countries, they can continue to go to school and work. If you develop fever, cough or shortness of breath, other members of your household should stay home until your symptoms are checked out by a medical provider.

10. What should I do if I have a medical emergency?

If you have a medical emergency while you are in home self-monitoring, you should call 911 and tell the operator about your recent travel.

11. What should I do if I develop an illness with fever, cough, or shortness of breath?

If you develop fever, cough or shortness of breath while in home self-monitoring, avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with other people, and call the NYC Health Department at 347-396-7990 for further instructions.

12. What if I need to leave home to receive medical care for a chronic illness or other issue?

If you need to see a doctor or health care provider for a medical problem, you should call your provider ahead of your visit and let them know about your recent travel.

13. What can I do if I feel overwhelmed or distressed about being at home?

Emotional reactions to stressful situations such as this emerging health issue are expected. It is normal to feel sad, anxious or overwhelmed, or have other symptoms of distress, such as trouble sleeping. If symptoms become worse, last longer than a month or if you struggle to participate in your usual daily activities, reach out for support and help. You can call [NYC Well](#) at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or text “WELL” to 65173. NYC Well is a confidential helpline that is staffed 24/7 by trained counselors who can provide brief supportive therapy, crisis counseling, and connections to behavioral health treatment and support in over 200 languages.

Returning to School or Work

14. Do I need to get cleared to return to work or school?

No. If you did not have any fever, cough or shortness of breath during your 14-day home self-monitoring period, you can go back to work or school. There is no formal clearance process. People without fever, cough or shortness of breath are not tested for the virus that causes COVID-19.

15. Who do I contact if I need a doctor’s note for my employer or school to explain my absence?

You can download and print a doctor’s note from the NYC Health Department’s website by visiting nyc.gov/health/coronavirus or calling 347-396-7990. Your school or employer may ask for documentation of your travel to confirm the dates of your home self-monitoring.

16. My employer or school is not allowing me to return after I completed home self-monitoring. What are my options?

There is no medical reason for your work or school to exclude you after the home self-monitoring period is over. Please show them the doctor’s note from the NYC Health Department. You can also report this situation to the NYC Commission on Human Rights by calling **311** and saying, “human rights.”

For more information on COVID-19, visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus or cdc.gov/coronavirus.

If feel you have been harassed due to race, nation of origin or other identities, call **311** and say, “human rights” to report to the NYC Commission on Human Rights.