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Dear Ventnor Families:

As our district leadership continues to learn more about Coronavirus (COVID19) and receive guidance from government agencies, I want to keep you informed about our work. Know that our goal is to keep schools opened unless we are directed by a government agency to close. Based on a county meeting I attended yesterday, the direction to address COVID19 is *mitigation*. This means making decisions and enacting practices that will reduce the spread and severity of this illness.

Please note: Per CDC and DOE guidance, effective immediately, any students, staff, parents, visitors, vendors and others who have travelled to/transited within countries that have a Level 3 Travel Health Notice (widespread, ongoing transmission; including China, South Korea, Iran and Italy) OR who have flu-like symptoms, are being asked to stay home and avoid contact with others for 14 days from the time you left the area.

In terms of field trips, evening events, community use of school facilities, and other large group gatherings, we are reviewing these things and will be making decisions regarding postponing or cancellation. This will be done in chunks of time such as from now until Spring Break as opposed to from now until the end of the year.

State Requirements and Waivers

- In the State of New Jersey, public schools are required to complete 180 days of schools—meaning school is opened with children and staff physically present.
- During other emergency situations, the Department of Education has not allowed a waiver to this regulation.
- For required closures due to COVID19, a waiver opportunity is being provided.
- Districts need to submit a plan and have it approved by the Department of Education to receive the waiver. The Ventnor School District has already submitted our plan.
- Receiving such a waiver means that the days do not need to be made up because educational activities are being provided.

District Planning / Continuity of Education

- Grade, content, and program-based educational activities are being developed as a form of home instruction.
- Depending upon the grade, program, and home technology access, the activities would be provided to families either hard copy (paper) or electronically.
- Related services for special education students would be made-up after school re-opened.
- Planning is also underway to identify if it is feasible to provide meals to our students, particularly those who qualify for free or reduced meals.

Educating and Supporting our Students

- Along with our goal to remain open, we see a responsibility to educate our children about this situation. This is being done in a positive manner since we do not wish to heighten concerns about COVID19 or illness in general.
- Our teachers and school nurses are providing “stay healthy” reminders to students.
- Additional posters about healthy habits such as handwashing are being added to the schools.
- As a family, you are encouraged to make decisions about how much media and conversation about COVID19 you want your children to see and hear.
- If your child is experiencing stress or anxiety over this situation, please contact your child’s teacher, counselor, or CST case manager.

Resources

- State Hotline 1- 800-222-1222
- State Website <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>.
- Center for Disease Control Website <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- Atlantic County Department of Health website <https://www.atlantic-county.org/public-health/>

Further updates regarding our plans as well as other pertinent information will be on our district website. Our staff remains committed to the safety and well-being of your children. If you have any questions, please contact your school’s main office.

Sincerely,



Dr. Eileen Johnson
Superintendent