

Dear Cohasset Families,

**We are canceling school and all home services from Monday, March 16, 2020 through Friday, March 27, 2020. We will reassess at the end of the two-week period, with an anticipated restart date of Monday, March 30, 2020.** This cancellation is part of a unified approach to this health crisis by the South Shore Superintendent's Lighthouse Group, which encompasses 27 local school districts.

Today, I joined a conference call with Commissioner of Education Riley, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). Although there was advice shared regarding how schools should proceed if there is someone in a school system that has potentially been exposed to COVID-19, or if someone in Cohasset Public Schools (educator or student) has contracted COVID-19, the Commissioner has left the final decision to keep schools open or to close schools to each district. In an abundance of caution, and in an effort to promote mitigation strategies during this health crisis, we are canceling for two weeks. The safety of our students, staff and community is paramount. We are monitoring information from the World Health Organization (WHO), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Cohasset Department of Public Health (CDPH) and town safety officials, and we will reassess the opening of schools at the end of this two week period. I have also consulted our District Physician in making this decision. We will continue to provide information as it comes our way, and I appreciate your patience as we manage this rapidly changing situation.

Information will be shared in via email to a link to the Cohasset Public School District webpage that will provide

- Information on the Cohasset Public Schools Webpage Regarding COVID – 19 (Coronavirus)
- Enrichment During Closure: Optional enrichment activities for younger students related to skill-building at home are available on the Cohasset Public Schools Webpage. In the interest of ensuring equity of access, we are not allowed to provide any digital or remote learning opportunities to replace in-person teaching during this closure, per the MA Commissioner of Education.

**These enrichment learning experiences are not mandatory and are not considered instruction. Commissioner Riley's Office made it clear that remote learning will not be allowed to take the place of a school day.**

**Food Support for Students:** We have worked with food services to develop essential services for students experiencing food scarcity to have access to food pick-up that will comply with social distancing expectations but still allow kids to eat. Hours for breakfast and lunch pick-up are 8-11 at the back of Cohasset High School (CHS loading dock), starting Monday, March 16. We ask that you please contact food services at (781) 383 6107 if you wish to take advantage of this program. Please also contact food services if you cannot make it to this location. Boston resident students will be able to access the city's food resources: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/food-access>.

**School Activities, School Events, School Trips and Facility Use:**  
Please see the link below for information regarding Activities, and Facility Use:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1y6NabJv5ysEd4FzpzCwbwHfA7\\_S43kP/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1y6NabJv5ysEd4FzpzCwbwHfA7_S43kP/view?usp=sharing)

All field trips, international trips and domestic trips have been cancelled until further notice.

**Boston Student Resources**  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uP\\_dNrMhXoEJE6XP0ivFTl6ZBvMFvLmW/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uP_dNrMhXoEJE6XP0ivFTl6ZBvMFvLmW/view?usp=sharing)

**School Employee Information**  
It is expected that all staff will check work email during this closure to remain informed.

During this closure, schools will be cleaned and disinfected using deeper disinfection equipment. Custodial staff will be asked to report to the schools to handle these activities.

Cohasset Public Schools Central Office will be open and the following essential personnel may be called to work during the closure: principals, central office administrative assistants, central office payroll clerk, bookkeeper/accounts payable, central office administrators, transportation coordinator / bus drivers, Food Service Manager / food service workers and the town Communication Information Officer (CIO) and Deputy CIO (technology).

## **Town Building Closures**

Please see the town of Cohasset Website regarding town building closures:

<https://www.cohassetma.org/>

## **Community Health & Prevention**

When a new illness is circulating, it's natural for people to ask what they can do to protect themselves and their families. For our community health actions to be effective, we need all community members to do their part by staying at home as much as possible during the school closure. Our best prevention guidance is:

- Practice social isolation—only leaving home as necessary
- Avoid large social gatherings
- Cover coughs/sneezes with tissues, or cough/sneeze into the inner elbow.
- Practice good **handwashing** with soap and water as often as possible
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers ONLY if soap and water are not available.

**What We Know About COVID-19:** The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a strain that is part of a large family of coronaviruses which usually cause mild respiratory illnesses, such as the 'common cold'.

Some coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as **Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)**. COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new coronavirus that was not previously identified in humans before December 2019.

**Quarantine and Isolation:** Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. *It can take between 2 to 14 days after a person gets the virus in their body to become (outwardly) ill.*

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19, and develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider immediately. Your healthcare provider can assess whether a test for COVID-19 is required. Depending on your contact and/or travel history, you will be asked to stay home for a period of 14 days from the time you had contact with a positive or presumptive positive person.

During the isolation period, you should not have visitors in the location where you are isolating. If you must share living quarters with another person, then that person will be subject to quarantine as well.

As noted above, we are asking students not to congregate and to remain as isolated as possible within their families to assist in slowing the virus spread.

**Follow-up and Next Steps**

This is an unprecedented public health situation that is rapidly changing. Our hope is that if we all work together, we can reduce the spread of this virus, protect our most vulnerable residents, and resume normal activities in two weeks.

**A status update will be distributed to families each day at approximately 5:00PM.**

We will keep you informed of any additional changes in operation as this rapidly evolving public health situation continues.

Please take good care,

Patrick Sullivan, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Cohasset Public Schools