



March 4, 2020

Dear Excel Academy Family,

I am writing to share information about the COVID-19 virus (novel coronavirus) and update you on steps we have been taking as a community to keep our students and staff safe and healthy. There have been no known cases of COVID-19 within our Excel Academy community and the risk of infection in MA remains low. Still, I want to assure you that we continue to take this issue very seriously. We are closely monitoring the situation and following guidance from the MA Department of Public Health (DPH), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and other local, state, and federal agencies.

At this time, there has been one confirmed case and one presumed-positive case of COVID-19 in MA, and the risk to MA residents remains low. MA residents are much more likely to become sick with a cold or flu than to be exposed to COVID-19. **Many of the same precautions that help prevent seasonal colds and the flu can also help to protect against other respiratory viruses. We urge all members of the Excel community to continue practicing healthy behaviors necessary during cold and flu seasons, including but not limited to:**

- Stay home when you are sick. Do not send your child to school if they are sick.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth to prevent the spread of germs.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue (or arm) when you cough or sneeze, and then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- Avoid sharing drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, dishes, towels, or other items.

These steps are among the most effective tools we have to prevent the spread of the flu and other viruses, including COVID-19.

We are and have already been taking additional precautions to ensure the health and safety of members of our community. We have been working with our cleaning companies to ensure they are following CDC-recommended cleaning and disinfecting protocols in our buildings. We are working with our Operations teams and nurses to ensure we are sufficiently stocked with supplies such as hand sanitizers, face masks, and alcohol wipes. Given recent media related to COVID-19, we wanted to share useful and credible sources of information, which are compiled below, along with FAQs. **Please note in particular that if your child or a member of your immediate family has traveled within the past two weeks to an area where there is community transmission of COVID-19, we are asking you to contact your school nurse to receive clearance before coming to school.**



Finally, I want to note that schools across the world have been observing an increase in anti-immigrant and anti-Asian discrimination. Please join me in affirming our community values, including our commitment to ensuring that all Excel students and staff feel safe and protected when they are at school. Please contact me or any administrator directly if you are aware of instances of bias, discrimination, or bullying.

I know that issues impacting public health can be very concerning. Keeping the Excel community safe, healthy, and informed is our highest priority. We will continue to monitor this situation closely and will provide additional updates in a timely manner. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your school nurse if you have questions or concerns.

Thanks for all that you do,

Owen Stearns
CEO
Excel Academy Charter Schools

Resources & Information:

- CDC updates on COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>
- MA DPH updates on COVID-19: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>
- CDC seasonal flu fact sheets: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/freeresources/multi-language-factsheets.html>
- CDC prevention & treatment guidance for COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>
- Boston Public Health Commission COVID-19 fact sheet (English): <https://bphc.org/whatwedo/infectious-diseases/Infectious-Diseases-A-to-Z/Documents/Fact%20Sheet%20Languages/2019%20novel%20coronavirus/English.pdf>
- Boston Public Health Commission COVID-19 fact sheet (Spanish): <https://bphc.org/whatwedo/infectious-diseases/Infectious-Diseases-A-to-Z/Documents/Fact%20Sheet%20Languages/2019%20novel%20coronavirus/Spanish.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What do I do if I am sick or have a concern that I have been exposed?

A: As always, we encourage all students and staff to stay home if they are sick or have symptoms of illness. Please call the school to excuse your child and speak to the school nurse if your child will be out for multiple days and you do not have a doctor's note. If a member of your immediate is sick with the flu or exhibiting flu-like symptoms and your child may have been exposed, please call the school and ask to speak with your nurse to determine whether your child should come to school.



Q: What do I do if I have recently traveled to China or another area where there is community transmission of COVID-19?

A: For the time being, we are asking all members of the Excel community who have recently traveled (within the past two weeks) to a country where there is community transmission of COVID-19 **not to come to school until cleared**. Please call your school and ask to speak with your school nurse if this situation may apply to your family. Areas where there is community transmission currently include China, Italy, South Korea, Iran, and Japan; within the United States there is [believed to be community transmission](#) in parts of Washington, Oregon, and California.

Q: Is school going to be closed?

A: At this time we have not been advised to close school or make other changes to regular programming. If school closure or changes to programming become advisable or necessary in the future, we will provide additional information at that time.