

March 1, 2020

Dear Lamoille North Families and Staff,

As our community members are enjoying the last few days of February break, I want to update all of you on the current information regarding the COVID-19 virus and the guidance we are receiving from The Vermont Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and our schools' plan. You will find general information about COVID-19 posted on the [LNSU website](#), including a memo from Secretary French of the Agency of Education. Please also see the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and [Vermont Department of Health](#). I recognize that there is a great deal unknown about this form of flu virus and it can cause fear and anxiety. These websites have up-to-date information about the virus and important information for schools and businesses.

I have been in daily contact with government leaders in Vermont and with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) everyday since February 24 so that I have the most accurate and up-to-date information available.

To help reduce the risk for getting and spreading viral respiratory infections, including the flu and the common cold, we are all encouraged to take simple steps which will also prevent COVID-19. These include:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Keep sick children at home.
  - Students and staff should not be sharing food or drinking from the same containers.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Help young children do the same.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue. Then throw the tissue in the trash and clean hands with soap and water.
- Use school provided cleaning supplies, especially on high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs and tabletops; they are effective and safe for adult and student use.
- Keep a supply of essentials and medicines on hand in the event you need to stay home.

Some of you have asked about quarantining students and staff who have traveled overseas during this vacation. The up-to-date guidance from both the Vermont Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control is for self monitoring symptoms during the 14 days following any overseas travel to affected areas. There is no recommendation for self isolation or quarantine at this time. In the event the guidance from these medical organizations changes, our school decision-making will change in accordance with their guidance. (Please note that our Tour Group in Italy did NOT travel in any areas identified as impacted by widespread COVID-19). The Vermont Department of Health has names and contact information for all Tour Groups in the

state of Vermont who traveled overseas and they will be periodically checking in with tour members over the next 14 days.

Our school nurses will be monitoring tour group students daily for the next 14 days as well as anyone else who might display signs of sickness. Please note that Vermont is currently experiencing the flu (both Influenza A and B) and any person experiencing symptoms of the flu or any other virus should be assessed by a medical professional as soon as possible.

I recognize when we are confronted with a situation that appears not well known at this time like the spread of this virus, and we see daily media reports with rising cases of people infected globally, we can feel fear and panic. The best way to respond to fear and panic is with accurate facts from our CDC and Vermont Department of Health. As of today, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 virus in Vermont. To date, 82,000 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in 45 countries, including the United States. By comparison, the CDC has reported that in the United States alone the 2019 - 2020 flu season has hospitalized 280,000 people and resulted in 16,000 deaths.

The situation with the COVID-19 virus is fluid. I will continue to be in contact with local and national health organizations daily, often multiple times per day to ensure that I have the most up-to-date guidance and information about how to keep Lamoille North schools and our community members safe. I will communicate more information as soon as I have it. We will continue to monitor the health of our students and staff and will alert our communities should we receive guidance to implement any new procedures from the Vermont Department of Health and/or CDC.

Thank you very much.

My best to you,

Catherine Gallagher, M.Ed.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Lamoille North Supervisory Union