



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
201 Main Street
VESTAL, NEW YORK 13850

March 11, 2020

Dear Vestal CSD Families, Staff and Community Members,

While neither the Vestal Central School District nor Broome County have had a reported case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) within the school community, we are taking multiple steps to address the potential outbreak of this relatively new virus. The District continues to aggressively monitor this extremely fluid situation while balancing the responsibility of preparedness without creating panic for our students, their families, and our staff. We continue to be in constant contact with the Broome County Health Department which, along with New York State Health Department, New York State Education Department and the Centers for Disease Control, is providing valuable real-time guidance.

The District will be utilizing all of our available resources when considering decisions related to this health event, including:

- **Cleaning**
 - Written guidance was provided on cleaning procedures to all school districts in New York State.
 - The District is planning for contingencies regarding the availability of supplies and other resources.
- **Absences**
 - Any children absent by family choice due to concern about coronavirus will count as an unexcused absence; however, the District will not impose any penalty on students.
 - In the case of unexcused absences, arrangements cannot be made for daily lessons to be sent home, but teachers will work with students to catch up once they return to school.
- **School/Activity Cancellations**
 - At this time, the New York State Education Department is not recommending school closures, unless advised by the Department of Health.
 - There is a recommendation to curtail international travel for students sponsored by schools, and we are adhering to this advice.
 - There is ongoing discussion about the use of preemptive school and large-group activity cancellations in the future.
 - The District will follow recommendations from the Department of Health if it becomes necessary to consider closing schools.
- **Communications**
 - There will be continued updates posted on the school website until the situation becomes more normalized.
 - Plans for remote communications are in place for staff, parents, and administrators if there is a need to close schools.

The District will continue to monitor the situation, consult relevant authorities, and inform the community of changes. We ask that your medical questions be directed to your family doctor/healthcare provider.

It is important to note that for many, school provides normalcy and predictability, particularly in times of fear and instability. We understand that this news may be concerning to many of our students and their families, and we are committed to being factual and comforting to our Vestal families and staff. Each day we engage your children in a safe, nurturing, intellectually challenging environment and we intend to stay true to this

mission unless, and until, the situation warrants a change. In the meantime, we ask families to continue to help their children process the current situation in honest and developmentally appropriate ways, and continue to practice hygiene habits recommended by the NYS Department of Health to minimize the spread of respiratory illnesses, such as the flu and COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Heavily soiled hands should be washed.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Please know that, as always, the health and safety of our students and staff is our highest priority, and we will remain vigilant in our efforts to help prevent the spread of this illness.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey J. Ahearn
Superintendent