

Dear Boston Public School Families and Employees,

With winter upon us, we would like all of us to do our part to ensure safe, healthy, and welcoming school environments for all. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent the spread of common winter illnesses, such as influenza or stomach viruses, in order to protect the health of our students, staff, and community members.

You can help prevent the spread of illness by ensuring you and your family receive flu vaccines as soon as possible. It is also important to cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing and to wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. If you or your child does get sick, staying home can prevent others from getting sick, too.

Sometimes it can be difficult for parents to decide whether to send their child to school when the student is experiencing symptoms of an illness. Employees also face the same decision about attending work when they are sick.

Below are guidelines to help families and employees decide when it is necessary to stay home. If an individual is experiencing any of the following symptoms, we ask parents to keep your child home, and for employees to stay home for 24 hours after symptoms resolve:

- **Fever** — *Temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.* Student needs to stay home for 24 hours after his/her temperature has returned to normal without any fever reducing medications, such as Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen.
- **Diarrhea** — *Three or more loose or watery stools in a 24-hour period, especially if the person feels ill.* Student or employee should stay home for 24 hours after the last watery stool.
- **Vomiting** — *Two or more times during the last 24-hours, especially if the person feels ill.* Student or employee should stay home for 24 hours after the last time he/she vomited.
- **Persistent Coughing** — *Could be caused by many illnesses.* Student or employee experiencing persistent coughing should see their primary care provider and stay home until it is resolved.
- **Fatigue** — *Symptoms include lingering tiredness, paleness, lack of appetite, difficult time waking, confusion and irritability.* Student or employee should stay home until he/she is well, or has seen his or her primary care provider.
- **Strep Throat or Bacterial Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)** — *Illnesses for which primary care providers have diagnosed and prescribed treatment.* Must stay home 24 hours after the first dose of antibiotics.



If any of the above symptoms appear while at school, please call to have the student picked up or arrange for the staff member to go home. We suggest that a primary healthcare provider also be consulted. Please contact the school nurse or healthcare provider if you are unsure whether or not school should be missed due to health conditions. Remember to report the reasons the child or employee is absent to school staff.

For the most up-to-date information on the 2019 novel coronavirus, please visit the [Boston Public Health Commission's website](#).

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact BPS Health Services at (617) 635-6788. For additional tips and resources, please visit the BPS Health Services Department website at <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/healthservices>.

Sincerely,



Margaret Van Cleve-Rocchio, RN, MSN, FNP, NCSN
Senior Director, Health Services

