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Dear Members of the Wellesley Public Schools Community,

We recognize that today's news of a presumptive case of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in Wellesley was disconcerting. First, we want to share what we know at this point.

- We were notified by the Wellesley Board of Health this morning that a town resident had received a presumed positive test for COVID-19 and that this individual has children who attend two of our schools (Upham and WMS.)
- We were also notified that both students are healthy and not exhibiting any symptoms and were directed that both students were to be dismissed from school.
- The children are following the quarantine protocol from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) until cleared to return to school. As with any communicable disease, towns and schools are required to follow the direction from the MDPH.
- In an abundance of caution we made the proactive decision to release students early at Upham and WMS in order to begin cleaning and sanitizing both buildings.
- All other WPS Schools completed their day on a regular schedule.

Additionally, we want to share the following information:

Ongoing coordination with the Town of Wellesley and the Wellesley Board of Health

Earlier today the Wellesley Health Department released this [public statement](#). They remain the primary point of contact for any communicable disease outbreaks. Their work is informed by the MDPH and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). We will continue to take our lead from their direction and guidance.

Plan for cleaning impacted buildings and buses

The Facilities Management Department (FMD) is conducting deep cleaning and disinfecting at Upham and WMS. These buildings will remain closed throughout the weekend. FMD is applying a disinfectant specific for the COVID-19 virus using [electrostatic dispenser guns](#). It should be noted that the custodians have already been using this equipment in all schools as we have employed enhanced cleaning techniques. In addition to our buildings, all school buses continue to be cleaned daily.

Cancellation of international trips

In accordance with guidance from the state, we have cancelled all international trips scheduled for Spring and Summer 2020. Families with children who were participating on these trips are working with their trip's teacher to manage reimbursements and vouchers.

www.wellesleyyps.org

Confidentiality

As with any medical information, confidentiality about our staff, students, and families must be maintained at all times according to federal regulations. Information about reasons for absences, travel history and illness cannot be given out and must be protected. Any inquiries about the impact of international travel should be directed to the Wellesley Board of Health, which will have the most up to date information on this topic.

Resources for talking with children about COVID-19

Concern over COVID-19 can make children and families anxious. We encourage parents and staff to use these [resources](#) and the [Teaching Tolerance website](#) when talking with our children about it. An important message is for children to know that adults at home and school are taking care of their health and safety. And, school and health officials are being *especially* careful to make sure as few people as possible get sick. Encourage children to reach out to a trusted adult if they have concerns.

Adhering to our WPS Core Values

As we continue to manage the COVID-19 situation, it is essential that we adhere to our core values, especially our *commitment to community* and our *caring relationships*. How we talk about COVID-19 so that no one group of students and/or families is spotlighted or profiled is our top priority. Support, empathy, and kindness are needed during these uncertain times.

Moving Forward

We are planning for an on-time opening of all schools on Monday, March 9th. We will continue to track and trend illness in all of the schools. Anyone who is ill should remain at home and we ask that you please consult with your primary care physician if you have any questions or concerns about sending your child to school.

Anytime there is an outbreak of a virus or illness, it can be very unsettling for families and staff. Keeping everyone informed, safe and healthy remains our priority. This situation is evolving and we encourage everyone to monitor the Wellesley Health Department's [website](#) for the latest information and any special instructions.

Residents may also contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health 24-hour emergency hotline at 617-983-6800.