Dear GPS community,

We know that many of you are concerned about Coronavirus. Media attention around this virus for the past several weeks has been strong. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, (MDPH), whom are working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are sharing the most up to date information available with us.

At this time, we know there has only been 1 confirmed case of Coronavirus and the risk to Massachusetts residents is low. Massachusetts residents are much more likely to become sick with a cold or the flu than to be exposed to Coronavirus.

It is extremely unlikely that anyone with travel to mainland China within the past 14 days would be at school. As of February 3, 2020, travelers from mainland China are arriving into the U.S. at only 11 airports where they are screened upon reentry. None of those airports are located Massachusetts. Travelers who are ill or who have traveled in the high-risk area of Hubei Province are being quarantined at the point of entry. Travelers from other parts of China without symptoms are being told to stay at home for 14 days from day of arrival.

Should a student, staff, or volunteer come to the nurse’s office with a fever, cough, difficulty breathing AND having contact with someone with Coronavirus or recent travel to China, the nurse will have the person wear a mask and if possible confine them to a separate room. If the nurse needs to stay in the same room, she will wear a mask and stand at least 6 feet away. The nurse will arrange the appropriate transportation for further medical evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment and notify our local board of health as well as MDPH epidemiology.

Please remember to practice the following precautions that help prevent transmission of colds, flu, and other respiratory viruses including the Coronavirus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If unable to wash with soap and water use alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your coughs or sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve (not with your hands)
- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick

If you are aware of anyone in our community that has traveled to China, please encourage them to listen to the guidance and stay isolated to their homes for 14 days even if they are not showing symptoms of being sick. If there has been anyone in the school community that has had recent travel to China and/or exposure to someone that has, please call me, the School Nurse Manager, at 978-632-4158 x 1, so that I may ensure that all appropriate precautions are taken. Further communication will be sent out if there are changes in the guidance we receive.

Sincerely,

Rebecca McCaffrey, School Nurse Manager, Gardner Public Schools