



Dear Parent/Guardian:

With the recent news of confirmed cases of COVID-19, caused by the novel coronavirus, within the Capital Region, we want to assure you that we are continuing to monitor information from local, state and federal officials. Currently, Schalmont has NO confirmed cases of COVID-19 within our schools.

On Saturday, March 7, Governor Cuomo declared a state of emergency in New York, which gives the state certain purchasing and hiring abilities during this time. ***This declaration does not impact any school or district activities at this time.*** Experts have not recommended that the district cancel or reschedule classes or other school events. In the event that a student does test positive for #Coronavirus in a school, that school will be closed for a 24hr period so we can do assessment of the situation. Then a determination will be made about whether to close the school for longer.

State officials continue to emphasize that the general risk to the public is low and that while we all need to be vigilant and cautious, it is also important to stay calm and not contribute to any undue panic.

Regarding travel and quarantine measures, please know that the New York State Department of Health has made quarantine a mandatory measure for individuals returning to the United States from a known high-risk exposure area. Based on this, any student, student family member or employee who has traveled to a known high-risk exposure area should notify the appropriate school principal prior to coming to or returning to school. You should also notify the county health department.

- Schenectady County Department of Public Health at 518-386-2824 on the web at [schenectadycounty.com/publichealth](https://www.schenectadycounty.com/publichealth).
- Montgomery County Public Health at [518-853-3531](https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/health)
- Albany –County Department of Health at 518-447-4580 or via the web at <https://www.albanycounty.com/departments/health>

For more information, please visit the Center for Disease Control’s web page for coronavirus and travel, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>

Again, if the Schalmont district becomes aware that one of our students or staff members is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will notify staff and parents/guardians immediately. For now, the most important thing you can do to protect yourself and your children continues to be following standard preventive practices for influenza. There are a number of steps that students, staff and community members can

take to minimize the spread of all respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, according to the New York State Department of Health:

- 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.

It is important to note that exposure to COVID-19 can occur from any person-to-person contact and is not limited to a particular race or ethnicity.

More information about COVID-19 is available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. The state Department of Health also has information available on its website, including a coronavirus hotline: <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>. You can call the hotline at 1-888-364-3065 with questions or concerns about travel and symptoms.

We are preparing to meet the needs of our students and staff in the event the virus affects our community. Schalmont has increased the cleaning cycles at all schools and on our buses. We have posted age appropriate signage regarding hand-washing at all schools, and we have implemented a monitoring program to track reported illnesses in the school.

We appreciate your support of our district and will share more information as it becomes available.

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,

Carol Pallas

Superintendent