

# Chesterfield Township School District

30 Saddle Way  
Chesterfield, NJ 08515



Tel: 609-298-6900 x1230  
Fax: 609-291-0620

*Office of the Superintendent*  
*Scott Heino*  
[sheino@chesterfieldschool.com](mailto:sheino@chesterfieldschool.com)  
[www.chesterfieldschool.com](http://www.chesterfieldschool.com)

March 12, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Although spring is still weeks away, the spring type weather this week is hopefully being enjoyed by all. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has put a damper on the joy that spring weather usually brings to New Jersey each year. As a school district, we continue to monitor COVID-19 closely, and we are now in the process of preparing an emergency plan specific to COVID-19. I know this is a lengthy letter, but please read the entire letter as information is requested at the conclusion of the letter that will allow the school district to properly prepare for all students.

Yesterday, you were notified of a change in the school schedule for next week. On Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, the Chesterfield Township School District will be following our early dismissal schedule, and students will be dismissed at 12:45 PM. The district is closing early on these two days to provide staff with time to collaborate as grade level teams and departments to plan for an extended school closing due to COVID-19. On Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Education notified all school districts in New Jersey that each district is required to submit a plan to the department outlining steps to implement home/remote instruction for all students.

I know the topic of COVID-19 has saturated the news media, but please know that the information about COVID-19 is constantly changing. As of today, I want to share some information with you to update you, as a parent, on what we are doing as a school district to address the concerns presented by COVID-19.

**SCHOOL CLOSING:** Again, please know that information and guidance is constantly changing. As of this morning, the Health Department is **NOT** considering a mandatory shut down of schools in New Jersey, nor does it plan to in the future. Any school closing will be considered on a district by district basis. I want to provide you with two examples of when the Health Department will require a school district to close due to COVID-19.

*Example #1 - Student A is healthy and shows no signs of illness. However, Student A visited his aunt over the weekend, and, after that visit, his aunt was confirmed to have COVID-19. When the Health Department traces the infected person's interactions (the aunt), they determine that Student A came into contact with the infected person. As a result, Student A's school district is notified, and the school district is required to close for one day to disinfect the building, and Student A is placed on self-quarantine for 14 days. However, all other staff and students are permitted to return after the one day closure for disinfecting.*

*Chesterfield Elementary School strives to build a premier institution of learning where students are challenged to their fullest potential in a safe and caring environment.*

*Example #2 - Student B's father just returned from a conference in NYC, where he was unknowingly exposed to COVID-19, and is starting to show signs of illness. He is confirmed to have COVID-19, as is the whole family including Student B. Since Student B has a confirmed case of COVID-19 and attended school, the Health Department will require the school district to close for a minimum of 14 days.*

It is the long-term closure that the Department of Education is requiring school districts to prepare for and submit a preparedness plan.

The Health Department is saying that children are in a low risk group for COVID-19, and most children will show signs of only minor illness. Only 2% of the confirmed cases are in individuals age 19 and younger. The groups that have a higher than normal risk are those age 60 and above, with individuals age 80 and above in the high risk group. If your child is showing any signs of illness, especially since these signs in children may seem minor, please exercise common sense and caution, and keep your child home.

As a school district, we will continue to take the necessary steps to prevent the spread of germs. It is important to remember that, currently, the best defense to COVID-19 is taking the same precautions everyone should be taking to combat the flu.

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water (20 seconds minimum)
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve instead of hands
- Stay home if you are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick or showing signs of illness

I also want to stress - please use common sense when attending school functions. If you are not feeling well or you have traveled to a location where you may have been exposed, please do not attend functions here at school, whether it be a school function or an activity sponsored by a group that uses the building. To keep our students, staff, and community safe, we must all take the necessary steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

As a school district, we are disinfecting high traffic areas at least twice a day. If a child is sick, the nurses are notifying the custodians to disinfect that specific classroom. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, and we will adjust our preventative steps as needed. As information is released, we will update you as parents.

I want to thank all parents for your understanding in this situation. It really is a team effort of our entire community to keep all residents, including our children, safe during this pandemic.

Parents, we do need feedback on one concern. As the staff prepares for the potential of a long-term closure, we need to know about families who do not have internet access and/or do not have a device at home. If your family does not have internet access and/or does not have a device at home to access the internet, please contact my administrative assistant, Mrs. Linda Nice, at [lnice@chesterfieldschool.com](mailto:lnice@chesterfieldschool.com), and clearly indicate your need. Thank you in advance for sharing this information with us so we can properly prepare for all students.

Sincerely,

  
Scott Heino  
Superintendent

*Chesterfield Elementary School strives to build a premier institution of learning where students are challenged to their fullest potential in a safe and caring environment.*