

Orange East Supervisory Union

Serving the towns of Bradford, Corinth, Groton, Newbury, Ryegate,
Thetford, Topsham, and Wells River

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Dear BMU Community:

This morning, we learned about a positive case of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) at Blue Mountain. We recommend that you take action to help limit the spread of COVID-19, even if your child is not experiencing symptoms. Please answer the phone if the Health Department or School contacts you. A contact tracer or the school nurse may be trying to reach you with important information. As we talk to the Department of Health today and tomorrow, we will reach out to you with updates and next steps.

I recognize that this situation is scary. We know that this infection began outside of our school system, and we are working with the Department of Health to notify anyone who may be considered a close contact. As this list is developed, we will reach out to families that the Department of Health considers to be close contacts. A close contact is defined as someone who: is within 6 feet of the sick person, with or without a mask, for more than 15 minutes. When contact tracing is done and all close contacts are notified, we will alert you that the process is complete.

Time and time again this community comes together in moments of hardship to support everyone's well-being. We need to continue to be vigilant in our safety precautions--always wear a mask, keep safe distance from others, keep kids home when they have any symptoms, and wash your hands often.

We will continue to pass along information when we can this weekend, while also maintaining the privacy of our community members. The Department of Health has strict protocols as to what we can and cannot share. We are also following their guidance on when information can be shared. Together we will get through this.

Out of an abundance of caution, we have made the decision to move Blue Mountain to remote learning on Monday and Tuesday of next week. This will give us time to complete all contact tracing and deep clean the building. We will return to in-person learning after the holiday break.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at emilie.knisley@oesu.org or the Vermont Department of Health.

Many thanks,

Emilie Knisley
Superintendent of Schools

The most important things you can do:

- Make sure your child is wearing [a mask](#).
- Make sure your child is [washing their hands](#).
- Keep your child home if they are sick.
- Call your primary care provider if you or your child has symptoms [of COVID-19](#).

What is COVID-19?

A new coronavirus causes COVID-19, which is an illness that was discovered in 2019. Coronaviruses are a type of virus that are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface. There are many kinds of coronaviruses including some that cause respiratory illnesses, like the common cold. The specific symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough

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- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 spreads mainly from having close contact with someone who has a COVID-19 infection. The virus is thought to spread by droplets from person to person when they speak, cough, or sneeze. Droplets travel less than 6 feet. When droplets from another person get in your mouth or nose you can inhale into your lungs. This virus can be spread by people without symptoms.

How can parents and guardians help prevent COVID-19 from spreading?

- If your child is sick, keep them home.
- Make sure members of your household wash their hands often using soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Make sure every member of your household covers their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their elbow, and then washes their hands afterwards.
- Wear a mask in public when you cannot stay 6 feet apart from other people.

We are working with the Health Department to keep our community safe.

- We continue to follow the Health Department's guidance [for Childcare and Summer Programs](#).
- We are cleaning and disinfecting per the Health Department guidance.
- Employees and sick children will not return to work until they are healthy.

Learn more about [getting tested in Vermont](#).