

# Belfast

Central School District

“a school dedicated to excellence”



[www.belfastcsd.org](http://www.belfastcsd.org)

## COVID-19 Community Update

Content sponsored and provided by Cattaraugus-Allegany BOCES

### NYS Assessment Update

It was announced on March 20, 2020 that, due to the closures caused by COVID-19, the 2020 elementary and intermediate level State assessments would be suspended for the remainder of this school year.



It is most important that during the time of closure, schools are able to continue to focus their efforts toward local school and community needs, as they have been doing, and not be concerned about State assessments. NYSED has applied for federal waivers for testing, accountability, and reporting requirements. We will keep you updated on these topics!

This suspension for the remainder of the school year applies to the following New York State testing programs:

- New York State Grades 3-8 English Language Arts Test;
- New York State Grades 3-8 Mathematics Test;
- New York State Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test;
- New York State Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test;
- New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) in Grades K-12; and
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) for students with severe cognitive disabilities in Grades 3-8 and high school.

### Stay Connected

**New York State Department of Health**  
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/new-york-state-pause>

**New York State Education Department**  
<http://www.nysed.gov/>

**Governor of New York**  
<https://www.governor.ny.gov/>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
<https://www.cdc.gov>

**World Health Organization**  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

**New York State Department of Labor**  
<https://www.labor.ny.gov/unemploymentassistance.shtm>

**Cattaraugus County Health Department**  
<https://www.cattco.org/health>  
 716-373-8050

**Allegany County Health Department**  
<https://www.alleganyco.com/health-department/>  
 585.268.9250

**Erie County Health Department**  
<http://www2.erie.gov/health/>  
 716-858-7690

**Wyoming County Health Department**  
<https://www.wyomingco.net/203/Health-Department>  
 585-786-8890

## Feel Sick? Follow These Steps!

- **Stay Home and Call a Health Care Provider** - Unless it is an emergency, to reduce your risk of catching or spreading illness, stay home if you feel sick. If your symptoms are severe or you feel like you need medical care, call before you go to a doctor's office, urgent care center or emergency room. Describe your symptoms over the phone. If you have a medical emergency, call 911.
- **Answer Questions to Determine Your Risk** - When you call a health care facility, you will be asked about your risks for COVID-19. Risk factors include recent travel to certain countries or areas of the U.S., or exposure to an infected person.
- **Follow Your Health Care Provider's Instructions** - Based on your answers to these questions, the care provider will provide instructions over the phone. You will be told if you need to be evaluated, and if so, what to do next. Based on your risk for COVID-19, your health care provider may recommend that you:
  - Δ Continue to monitor your health and call back if you develop a fever or respiratory symptoms.
  - Δ Stay home and await further instructions.
  - Δ Report to a designated medical care facility for evaluation and treatment.
  - Δ Go to a clinic or emergency department if you have more severe symptoms, such as higher fever and severe shortness of breath.
- **Practice Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette** - If you do leave your home to go to a care facility, wear a mask so your coughs and sneezes are less likely to infect others. (Masks are NOT recommended for healthy people in the general population.) Wash your hands thoroughly (for at least 20 seconds) after sneezing, blowing your nose, coughing or using the bathroom, and before preparing or eating food. If you cough or sneeze, do so into the bend of your elbow, not your hand. Or use a tissue, and then throw it away immediately afterward. At home, clean often-touched surfaces such as doors and doorknobs, cabinet handles, bathroom hardware, tabletops, phones, tablets and keyboards regularly with disinfectant.
- **Stay Calm** - The possibility of having a contagious illness is scary, but doctors, nurses and other caregivers are learning more about COVID-19 every day. They are working together with national and international agencies to identify and provide care to patients while avoiding spread of the illness in the community.

## Parent Child Care Needs Survey

If you are a parent or caregiver who needs child care, please complete this Parent Need for Child Care Survey. Based on the information you provide about your job, employer, number of children, and financial need, the New York State Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) may be able to help you find the child program you need. It may be a challenge to find child care due to COVID-19 related program closures, however NYSOCFS is trying to support families to find the high quality child care that they need.

Visit the following link to complete: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3HSNNYJ>

## AP Exam Update

Roughly 18,000 AP students were surveyed to see if they still wanted the opportunity to take an AP test. The answer -- 91% responded that they did!

For the 2020 administration of AP exams, instead of taking a several-hour AP exam at school or a testing center, students will take a 45-minute at home exam that consists only of free-response questions for each AP test. This will only happen for 2020; next year AP exams will return to their usual format.

The College Board decided to make this change to both keep students safe during the COVID-19 outbreak but also give students the opportunity to still get AP exam scores. The College Board has stated that colleges support their solution and will ensure students still receive college credit for high AP scores from this year's tests.

**For more information visit:**

<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/coronavirus-updates>

## How Did We Get Here?

**March 17, 2020** - While our District was already taking recommended, precautionary measures to protect the health of students, staff, and community, a March 17 order from the New York State Education Department required that all public schools, private schools, and charter schools move to closure as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Each school district was **required to submit a plan to NYSED** that would provide a plan for continuity of instruction, specialty services, and nutrition/meal plans. We are pleased that our plans were accepted and are successfully and creatively being carried out by our dedicated staff members.

**March 21, 2020** - Governor Andrew Cuomo, announced that New York State would be on PAUSE. In short, this means that non-essential businesses must close, non-essential gatherings of any size must be canceled, and citizens should stay home as much as possible. Essential businesses and services will take extra precautions to maintain health and promote social distancing. The aim of this order is to slow the spread of COVID-19 as quickly as possible and get our communities up and moving again. As a district, we encourage you to do all you can to keep your family and community safe.

**March 27, 2020** - A new Executive Order from Governor Andrew Cuomo, extended statewide school closures until April 15. As a part of the order, Districts will be required to maintain continuity of instruction, student meals, and childcare services for first responders or healthcare workers throughout the extended closure period, including during scheduled spring breaks, in order to receive waiver of 180-day requirements and avoid losses in aid. We will continue to communicate with you on these requirements.

**Today** – We continue to stay in contact with our local health departments, the New York State Department of Health, and the New York State Education Department to make the choices for our district that focus on safety and student success.

## Top Tips for Safe Online Learning

With many of our children spending more time online, below are some tips for safety and success in an online learning environment:



- **Use high-quality sources & sites** - Your school district has compiled a list of quality resources for you to use – use them. Free videos and games seem like a good deal, but they can have spyware and viruses. Similarly, warn kids to not open email messages from people they don't know.
- **Set limits** - Establish appropriate limits on the amount of time children may spend online and what kinds of sites they may visit.
- **Put the computer in a communal area** - Putting the computer in a central area, rather than in a child's bedroom, is a simple way to make sure you're aware of your child's online activities. Obviously, thanks to laptops and mobile devices, kids have access to the internet through other means; however, you could make a rule of no devices allowed in the kids' bedrooms if you find it necessary
- **Explain the concept of a digital footprint** - Encourage kids to think long-term before posting online. High school kids should ask themselves before they post something if they would want colleges or employers to see it. Despite what kids might think, nothing on the internet is completely private; messages and pictures sent privately can be copied and passed around, and content posted online never completely goes away.
- **Create strong passwords** - Explain how to come up with strong passwords that aren't easy to guess.
- **Keep personal information private** - Discuss with kids what kind of information is appropriate to share online, and what is not. One common recommendation is that kids should not share phone numbers, addresses, or birth dates.
- **Teach digital citizenship** - The relative anonymity of the internet can make kids (and grown-ups) say and do things they wouldn't do in real life. Telling lies or secrets and making cruel comments are all forms of cyber-bullying. Kids should never say anything online that they wouldn't say to another person's face.
- **Keep the lines of communication open** - Have an age-appropriate conversation about your family's values, and share why kids should avoid content and conversations that you find objectionable. Make sure kids know they can always come to you if something happens that makes them uncomfortable or hurts their feelings.

Resource: [www.learningliftoff.com](http://www.learningliftoff.com)

## Talking to Children About COVID-19

1. **Remain calm and reassuring**
  - Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
  - What you say and do about COVID-19, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease your children's anxiety.
  - Remind them that you and the adults at their school are there to keep them safe and healthy.
2. **Make yourself available**
  - Children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions.
  - It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them; make time for them.
3. **Avoid excessive blaming**
  - When tensions are high, sometimes we try to blame someone.
  - It is important to avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.
4. **Monitor TV and Social Media**
  - Limit television viewing or access to information on the Internet and through social media. Try to avoid watching or listening to information that might be upsetting when your children are present.
  - Speak to your child about how many stories about COVID-19 on the Internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
  - Talk to your child about factual information of this disease—this can help reduce anxiety.
5. **Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible**
  - Keep to a regular schedule, as this can be reassuring and promotes physical health.
  - Encourage your children to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed
6. **Be honest and accurate**
  - In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
7. **Review and model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection.**
  - Encourage your child to practice every day good hygiene—simple steps to prevent spread of illness:
    - Δ Wash hands multiple times a day for at least 20 seconds (singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star slowly takes about 20 seconds).
    - Δ Cover their mouths with a tissue when they sneeze or cough and throw away the tissue immediately, or sneeze or cough into the bend of their elbow. Do not share food or drinks.
8. **Communicate with your school.**
  - Make a habit of regularly reviewing updates and instructions from your child's school - both academic and health/community updates are often offered in those updates.

*Developed by the National Association of School Nurses and the National Association of School Psychologists.*



**Belfast Central School District**  
**1 King Street**  
**Belfast, NY 14711**

www.BelfastCSD.org

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Josie Preston, President  
Randa Harrington, Vice President  
Becky Backer  
Cecy Curcio  
Chris Enders  
Dan Borden  
Patricia Krotz

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION

U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 1825  
Olean, NY  
14760

**ECRWSS**

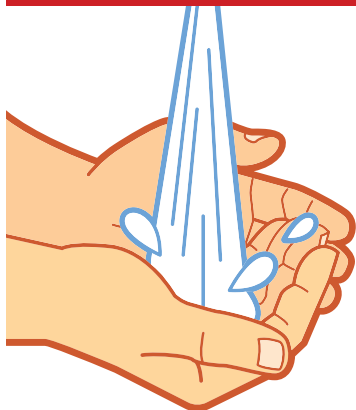
**Or Current Resident**

**or Local Postal Patron**



**FIGHT GERMS BY WASHING YOUR HANDS!**

**1 Wet your hands**



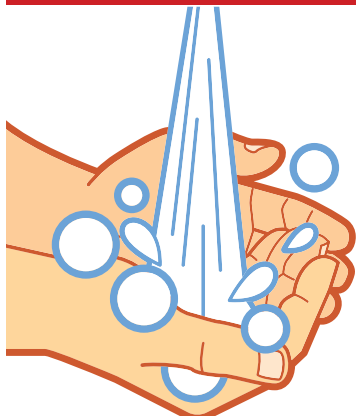
**2 Soap**



**3 Lather/Scrub - 20 sec**



**4 Rinse - 10 sec**



**5 Dry your hands**



**6 Don't forget to wash:**

- between your fingers
- under your nails
- the tops of your hands
- under your rings

