

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We understand that the Novel Coronavirus, now known as COVID-19, is causing much anxiety in our community, state and the world. Benton Community School District is working closely with Benton County Public Health and the Iowa Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.

What is Known

- **The virus causing COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified and causes a respiratory illness ranging from a mild cold-like illness to severe respiratory disease.**
- **Similar to influenza, the people who are most likely to have severe disease and complications from COVID-19 are believe to be the very old, very young and those with other chronic or underlying medical conditions.**
- **There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19, so prevention is very important.**
- **Currently, there are NO confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Iowa. However, experts predict there will eventually be community spread. IDPH, Benton County Public Health and Benton Community School District are preparing for when/if this happens.**

How The Virus Spreads

- **COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads—through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes.**
- **People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.**
- **People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).**

What You Can Do Now

- **Keep children home when they are sick.**

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- **Students (and parents/guardians) who are ill, especially with acute respiratory symptoms (not allergies or chronic conditions), should stay home.**
- **Teach your children to always cover their cough and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.**
- **Remind them to wash their hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer) after they touch their face, use the restroom and before they eat.**
- **Tell children to avoid touching their mouth and nose since that is how germs get into the body.**
- **Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (everyday household disinfectants are fine).**
 - **Enhance cleaning of high touch surfaces like doorknobs, toilet handles and sink handles.**
- **Plan for when community spread occurs.**
 - **Ensure you have a plan to designate a caregiver, such as a family member or neighbor, for a sick child(ren) if you can't stay home.**
 - **Know your child's school plan to communicate with you when needed, such as robocalls, email or checking their website.**

Find up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Iowa at <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus> and follow IDPH on Facebook at @IowaDepartmentofPublicHealth and Twitter at @IAPublicHealth, as well as our district social media <https://www.facebook.com/BentonCSD/>

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