

## Newell School District community,

As the presence of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) has increased in the United States over the last few weeks, this message updates you on school district operations. ~~According to the South Dakota Department of Health, at this time South Dakota has no cases of the virus and no pending tests.~~ (This has changed since the letter was issued)

The Newell School District is committed to keeping our learning community informed. The health and well-being of our students, staff, and community are a top concern.

**The Newell School District will make decisions in cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies.** We are continuing to work closely with the South Dakota Department of Health so we can respond quickly to any changes in their recommendations, guidance, and direction. If a case of COVID-19 is found in the Newell School District, we will follow direction from public health officials, which may include closing schools and cancelling activities and sporting events.

If needed, it is likely, at a minimum, that the Newell School District would close for several days for disinfection. We would only re-open after we are satisfied that it is safe for students and staff to return to school. Our custodial staff is using a cleaner labeled as a disinfectant for the Covid 19 virus.

The Newell School District encourages the community to have plans in place, especially for those with younger children. Actions to take include:

- Finding alternative childcare arrangements for your children in case of school closure.
- Talking to your neighbors and other parents in your child's school about sharing childcare duties if your children are well but the school is closed.
- Talking to your employer about policies for working from home or shifting work schedules or responsibilities if schools are dismissed or you become sick.

**There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Ensure you and your family members are up to date on your flu vaccine.

**Here are some helpful guidelines for keeping your child at home if they are too sick. These are also helpful for adults to follow when they are sick as well.**

### **Good to Go!**

If your child has any of the following symptoms, they can *probably* go to school:

- Sniffles, runny nose and/or mild cough **without a fever**. This could be an allergic response to dust, pollen or seasonal changes.
- **Vague complaints** of aches, pains or fatigue
- **Single episode** of diarrhea or vomiting without any other symptoms

### **Stay Home!**

If your child has any of the following symptoms, please keep them at home:

- **Fever** – 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Remember that a child must be fever free for 24 hours **WITHOUT** the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to school.
- **Fever with Cough** – a fever of over 100 degrees Fahrenheit plus a cough could indicate a virus that needs attention from a medical provider. Please call your healthcare provider.
- **Shortness of Breath** – difficulty breathing especially if it affects talking or walking, feeling of tightness in the chest, wheezing, blue/dusky color around lips or beds of nails. This could be serious, please call your healthcare provider or 911.
- **Eyes** – thick with mucus, pus draining, pink eye. With pink eye you may see white or yellow discharge, matted eyelids after sleep, eye pain and/or redness.
- **Chronic Cough and/or green nasal discharge** – These conditions may be contagious and require treatment.
- **Sore throat** – especially with fever or swollen glands in the neck. With Strep throat, the child may return to school after 24 hours on antibiotics.
- **Diarrhea** – three or more watery stools in a 24 hour period
- **Vomiting** – two or more times in a 24 hour period

This guidance is likely to change as this situation evolves, so please know we are committed to providing you with timely updates and guidance aligned with the best recommendations and guidance from our public health authorities.

If you have additional questions about the coronavirus, I encourage you to go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>