March 2, 2020

Dear Sanford School Community,

The Sanford School Department recognizes that the recent outbreak of the respiratory illness known as Coronavirus (COVID-19) is causing concern. Please be aware that we are receiving guidance from local and state health departments, the York County Emergency Management Agency and the Maine Department of Education on how to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. We are pleased to report that there are currently no cases of COVID-19 in the State of Maine. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have advised all schools to have plans in place and to communicate with staff, students, and parents the steps necessary to prevent the spread of this and other illnesses.

**What is Coronavirus?** Coronavirus is a respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The official name of the virus is "SARS-CoV-2" and the disease it causes is "Coronavirus disease 2019" or "COVID-19". The United States reported the first confirmed instance of person-to-person spread with this virus on January 30, 2020. [www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus)

**What does the disease look like in humans?** Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 include fever and/or cough and difficulty breathing. Some patients have reported a sore throat. If you have these symptoms and have not recently traveled to China or had contact with someone with the Coronavirus, it is likely to be a cold or the flu.

**What is the best way to prevent the spread of the disease?** It is very important to recognize that we see typically see influenza and other respiratory illnesses this time of year. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) continue to encourage individuals to receive a flu shot. In addition, the following CDC recommendations are essential in reducing the spread of all germs:

- **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness. Avoid close contact with sick people whenever possible. If your child has a fever, please keep them home until at least 24-hours after the fever has subsided without the use of fever-reducing medicines, such as acetaminophen. Staff are to do the same.
• **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs spread this way.

• **Cover coughs and sneezes.** Use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes, then dispose of the tissue. When a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.

• **Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects.** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.

• **Wash hands for 20 seconds.** Washing hands often under clean, running water with soap can help prevent the spread of germs. If you cannot wash your hands, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60-95% alcohol until soap and water is available.

Please be aware that our custodial staff is taking additional steps to disinfect all commonly touched areas in our schools such as desktops, doorknobs and water fountains on a daily basis.

Thank you in advance for following the recommendations above. Please review with your family how best to prevent the spread of germs. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at maine.gov/doe/covid-19 for the most current information regarding COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Matt Nelson
Superintendent