

Parents and Patrons of the Cozad Community Schools:

We want to update you on our district plan regarding the Coronavirus. As with any contagious illness, we are working closely with Two Rivers Health Department and will follow their guidelines. Based on those guidelines, staff will be in contact with all appropriate entities as the need arises. After attending meetings with the NDE and Two Rivers Health Department, it is becoming obvious that there are no hard and fast mandates or edicts coming from either organization that will inform our school when it must close and for how long. Please bear with all of us as we attempt to navigate this situation. We plan to communicate with you via our messaging notification system and other digital media outlets.

Also, many parents have already heard from some of our surrounding schools and media regarding the possibility of electronic instruction of students during the time they are out of school. Our school attorney has informed us that this plan has legal issues...so any day we are forced to be at home, instead of at school, due to pandemic conditions, will be considered a "day out of school educationally, whereby there will be no instruction." It may be required that these non-educational days be made up after the end of the academic calendar year.

If you suspect your student is ill, we are asking you to keep them home from school.

We encourage you to check out the following resources regarding the Coronavirus from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention:

- a. **Coronavirus Summary:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- b. **Frequently Asked Questions:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/gaq.html>

Some information and steps we are taking on the local school level:

Q. Who makes the decision to close school?

A: If an outbreak occurs, and school closures are recommended or ordered, decisions will be made following discussion between the school district and Two Rivers Public Health Department. We will also consider guidance from the Nebraska Department of Education. The school district is unable to know if or when individuals are exposed to any illness, which is why we follow guidelines from expert agencies like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and our local public health department. Rather than recommending the cancellation of schools, at this time, these agencies are asking people who may have been exposed to the virus to stay home.

Q: How are student absences being handled?

A: All student absences due to illness will be excused with parent confirmation that a child is ill.

If your student is home ill, we ask that parents describe the symptoms the student is experiencing (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, nausea, etc.) when reporting an absence. Students are strictly prohibited from attending school until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without temperature reducing medication.

District policies governing student absences for reasons other than student illness will continue to be enforced.

Q: Are there any plans to alter or cancel travel, field trips, school dances, etc... due to concerns?

A: There are no recommendations from public health officials at this time for the school district to cancel school events. According to state and local health officials, students and staff should continue with normal daily activities and practice the same precautions you use during cold and flu seasons. If a student falls ill during an activity trip, we will follow the same procedure as we would at school, in that we will isolate the student and contact the parent/guardian to pick up the student.

If public health officials recommend that the district cancel events or activities, the school district will comply with that recommendation. We will use our regular communication systems to share that information with families if it becomes necessary. Presently, avoiding large groups of people is a strategy barrier to the virus.

Q: Are additional sanitization procedures taking place at sites and in classrooms?

A: Our district is already implementing additional sanitation procedures. We have hand sanitizer available in all classrooms. Custodial staff is implementing increased cleaning procedures, including disinfecting high-traffic locations using state-recommended cleaning procedures. All soap and sanitizer dispensers are being filled regularly. We are also reminding students on how to properly wash hands, which is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of germs and respiratory illnesses according to health officials.

Q: Are alcohol-based hand sanitizers allowed in the school?

Yes.

Q: What if a student catches the virus?

A: Any time a student is confirmed to have a communicable disease, the district communicates with our local public health department for directives and guidance preventing the spread of the specific communicable disease. This not only applies to coronavirus but other health conditions

as well (H1N1, tuberculosis, meningitis, etc.). The Public Health Department will notify the district of any known cases.

Q: What if someone in a student's or staff member's immediate family is diagnosed? Are all quarantined in that household?

A: If students or staff come in contact with someone confirmed to be an infected person they should stay home, contact their medical provider, and call the Two Rivers County Public Health Department at (888) 669-7154. If someone must quarantine or isolate, they will be notified by health department.

Q: What happens if a child is symptomatic with flu/cold symptoms?

A: If a child is symptomatic (fever, shortness of breath, cough, congestion), they should stay home and contact their physician for further guidance. A child may return to school once he or she is fever free for 24 hours without medication. If they are at school, and begin to feel sick, they should check in with the health office and wait for their parent/guardian to pick them up if needed. Remember that schools are not equipped to screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID- 19.

Q: There's so much information out there and I don't know what's true or not. Where can I go to find the most updated information about the coronavirus?

Be sure to always get your information from credible sources such as:

Local - <https://rivcoph.org/coronavirus> or call 2-1-1.

State - Nebraska Department of Education

Federal - Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Ron Wymore, Superintendent
Administrative Staff
Cozad Community Schools