

March 9, 2020

Good afternoon:

The recent outbreak and spread of Coronavirus or COVID-19 has prompted a lot of media attention as well as questions and concerns on the impact it may have on schools.

While **no confirmed cases have been reported in Ohio**, the Shawnee School District is working closely with health officials and being especially careful to continue aggressive illness prevention habits, including daily disinfecting of surfaces, frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand cleansers with students and staff.

We know that it's easy to feel anxious in light of the information being reported, but want to encourage parents and students to remain calm and be aware of the proactive steps each one of us can take to minimize illness and where to turn for accurate information.

Much like the flu, COVID-19 can cause mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) recommend several basic measures to help prevent the spread of respiratory illness such as COVID-19:

DO

- **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.
- 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.
- Encourage your child to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a strong immune system to fight off illness.
- Stay home when you are sick; contact your health care provider immediately if you think you've been exposed to Covid-19.
- Wash or disinfect bookbags, coats/jackets and other items that students use frequently.
- Be honest and accurate with your children, as they often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- Explain to your children that at the present moment, very few people in this country are sick with COVID-19.

For additional factual information contact your school nurse, your doctor, the Health Department or check the CDC website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.