



Dear Minnesota Transition Family,

Health officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) are monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness, called coronavirus disease 2019 (now named: COVID-19), caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. I want to assure you that our school is keeping track of this situation through these proven and trustworthy sources as well as our county health department and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). **These health officials believe the risk to our school community is low at this time.** As of March 6, there is one confirmed case of COVID-19 in Minnesota, but this is a travel related case. The Minnesota Department of Health does not feel that the community in general is at risk from this case.

Updated information from the CDC on COVID-19 in the United States can be found at:

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

The most recent information about COVID-19 in Minnesota may be found at:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>

Much is being learned about this newly emerged virus. Based on the current information, health officials are recommending local communities and schools should take the same steps to protect against COVID-19 as we take to prevent the spread of everyday illnesses like the common cold or the flu:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and if you must wash hands before and after touching face.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- **Stay home when you are sick.**
- Cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

This new virus is believed to be spread through the air when a person coughs or sneezes, much in the way the flu and other respiratory viruses are spread. It also may be possible to spread COVID-19 by touching surfaces or objects that have the virus on them and then touching your nose, mouth, or eyes. The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (community spread) in some affected geographic areas.

Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected. Symptoms may include fever, cough, and shortness of breath/difficulty breathing. At this time, persons considered at risk are those with travel to international locations where there is community spread of COVID-19, healthcare workers caring for persons with COVID-19, and those in close contact with persons who have COVID-19.

While a new type of illness can be scary, we can protect our students, teachers, and the broader community by using simple everyday actions that protect people from other types of respiratory viruses. Our teachers, school nurse, and staff are working carefully to encourage these simple and effective habits of frequent handwashing, covering every cough or sneeze, and cleaning school tables/surfaces frequently. This is important not just to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, but to help prevent the spread of other infections that can lead to student illness and absences.

Thank you for your support of our school, our students, our teachers, and staff.

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