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## Coronavirus Update

March 3, 2020

South Whidbey Staff, Students and Families:

You are a critical member of our team. The district is working with all of our partners including the County and State health departments to stay current on the situation. **You can help!** The most important thing we all can do is to wash our hands and avoid touching our face. This is something you can emphasize with children as our best defense and our best protection for ourselves and others. There is [a five minute video](#) on the virus that is very helpful. Please take the time to view it. The health and safety of our students, staff, and families is our top priority. Currently, there are **NO** confirmed cases of COVID 19 in the South Whidbey School District.

For up to date information (including all current and previous Superintendent letters regarding the virus) and additional resources including how to stay healthy, visit our coronavirus disease 2019 webpage: [https://www.sw.wednet.edu/families/health\\_services/corona\\_virus](https://www.sw.wednet.edu/families/health_services/corona_virus).

Spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a rapidly evolving situation and we are committed to keeping you informed. We are aware of the outbreaks in the surrounding areas. We are aware of the North Whidbey Middle School staff member's spouse who was a first responder at last week's COVID-19, Coronavirus outbreak at the Life Care Center in Kirkland. The individual was notified this weekend that they would have to be quarantined in Kirkland with the other first responders, despite displaying no symptoms of the virus.

You can expect communication from SWSD multiple times a week as new information is provided. This is a team effort among our leadership team including nurses and all supervisors, staff, students, families and community members. SWSD Leadership met this morning to review and discuss the developments. K-6 staff will be meeting this afternoon and 7-12 staff will be meeting first thing in the morning to review recent developments and current plans. Students will be reviewing precautionary methods and continue to discuss good hygiene during the day tomorrow. Our goal is to keep everyone safe, educate, stay calm and keep others as calm as possible, and make sure our public is informed.

We continue to sanitize over the course of everyday and in the evenings. We are monitoring the situation closely and our schools remain open. We will notify you if there is any change. If we do need to close we expect to make up for those days. This will likely impact the date of graduation and the

last day of school. It is too soon to predict at this time. Current law requires 180 days of school. The Superintendent of Public Instruction can grant waivers to the 180 days. This is yet to be determined.

## **KEEPING SCHOOLS HEALTHY UPDATE**

### **Handwashing**

Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to contain the spread of illness and disease, including COVID-19. We are asking schools to prioritize handwashing when students arrive at school, anytime they have used the restroom, and prior to lunch. These are always good habits, and critical to the containment of the disease. Our school-based staff will be prioritizing handwashing, and custodial staff will keep soap fully stocked in bathrooms and classrooms to support these efforts. Staff will also reinforce good hygiene and remind students to not touch their face, nose, or mouth, sneeze into a tissue or elbow, and reduce physical hand contact (high fives, fist bumps, etc.). The district will work with individual school leaders to address school-based challenges to regular handwashing.

### **How can families and partners help?**

If regular hand washing isn't possible, the next best option is to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or sanitizer wipes, with at least 60% alcohol. Currently, the district has supplies for schools but because this is a national and global event there eventually could be a shortage. We are okay at this time. One way families and partners can help is to provide hand sanitizer or alcohol-based sanitizer wipes to school offices (at least 60% alcohol, dye free and fragrance-free) and tissues. These resources will help prevent classrooms from running short on supplies. The district is also providing schools with other related cleaning supplies. The district has ordered additional bottles of classroom hand sanitizers and large bottles of bulk sanitizer to support restocking needs. In addition to the sanitizing machines mentioned in an earlier email to you, we have ozone machines on order as well.

You can bring donations to your school's main office. This will help the district's efforts to continue to sanitize surfaces and help with hygiene.

### **Practice Good Hygiene and Prevention Suggestions:**

- 1) Use disinfectant wipes at the stores when they are available, including wiping the handle and child seat in grocery carts.
- 2) Wash your hands with soap for 10-20 seconds and/or use a greater than 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer whenever you return home from ANY activity that involves locations where other people have been.
- 3) Keep a bottle of sanitizer available at each of your home's entrances. Keep one in your car for use after getting gas or touching other contaminated objects when you can't immediately wash your hands.
- 4) If possible, cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard.

### **School and Common Area Cleaning**

Custodial staff have been directed to prioritize and increase frequency of cleaning common and high traffic areas throughout the day. In a normal situation these areas would be cleaned once a day. Prioritized cleaning includes drinking fountains, bathrooms, the lunchroom, common spaces, door handles, emergency bar on doors, etc. This means that ongoing “maintenance” or litter pick-up outside will be deprioritized temporarily. All efforts will be made to keep students healthy and safe.

### **School Bus Cleaning**

All school bus drivers are equipped with sanitizer spray and are prioritizing sanitizing the buses in their entirety after each run (twice a day). If a student is found to be sick while on the bus, the transportation department is immediately notified and it is reported to the schools immediately.

### **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS OR CONTACT RESPONSE UPDATE**

There is no rapid test for COVID-19. A child with mild respiratory symptoms (or recovering from influenza) that does not meet the guidance for testing may not be tested at a hospital emergency room. Island County encourages parents to keep children at home until symptoms have resolved and to contact their regular medical provider before going to an emergency room.

#### **If a student or staff person exhibits COVID-19 symptoms while at school:**

COVID-19 symptoms include a fever of 100 degrees, cough, and/or difficulty breathing. If a student presents these symptoms while at school, they will be immediately sent to the nurses’ office in the school to be evaluated and monitored. A family member or emergency contact will be called to pick them up. We recognize this may cause anxiety and fear for our students and we will do our best to address any concerns. We are committed to ensuring students are supported with love, compassion, and care.

If a staff person exhibits symptoms, they will be asked to leave school and call their healthcare provider immediately. We will monitor the staff person’s health conditions as appropriate.

#### **If the CDC requires quarantine of a staff person or student who is not ill but may have been exposed and has been to a school site, the district will do the following:**

- Remove the individual from the school location
- Contact the school community – staff, families, and partners
- Cancel all school events on day of CDC notice
- Activate specialized and extensive cleaning of the school
- SCHEDULE and OPERATIONAL CHANGES UPDATE

In order to prioritize custodial supports and resources, all non-district building rentals and events in South Whidbey School District will be cancelled. District staff will be reaching out directly to partners to communicate if they are affected.

#### **Assemblies, sporting events, or other gatherings:**

At this time, public health agencies are not recommending that the general public avoid gatherings, and we are not recommending cancelling events, unless the school needs to be closed for specialized cleaning. However, people who are at higher risk of illness may want to consider ways to lower their risk of infection, such as limiting contact with crowds. This includes older people, those with underlying health conditions such as heart disease and lung disease, and those who are immune compromised (see People at High Risk for Flu Complications). Individuals with underlying health issues should talk to their healthcare provider to develop a plan based on their specific health conditions.

Custodial staff must be prioritized for daily cleaning in our schools and after-hours events presents an additional challenge to this commitment. Schools may choose to cancel or postpone school-based events in order to focus resources on keeping the schools clean and healthy

South Whidbey School District has standard procedures on when we close schools in response to health situations. We will continue to partner with public health agencies when determining if and when schools will be closed.

Below are resources including an update today from Island County:

### **STAYING INFORMED**

From Island County

### **COVID -2019 Community Guidance**

03-Mar-202: Important Information and Resources

([stay current with information from the Island County Public Health website](#))

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*As a result of the widespread global transmission of COVID-19, we expect to see more cases locally and across Washington State.*

*Island County Public Health is actively monitoring the situation and is working closely with the Washington State Department of Health and our regional partners. Our staff investigate any suspect cases and are working with travelers returning from affected international locations to ensure home isolation protocol is followed. Staff are also communicating with local medical providers to assess response needs and to provide timely guidance to our community.*

*Many people are understandably anxious. It is important to remember that most coronavirus illnesses are mild with fever and cough and often resemble the symptoms of flu and colds; the majority of cases do not require hospital care.*

*There are a number of steps that individuals can take to reduce the spread of novel coronavirus. Public Health recommends that organizations and individuals prepare now in order to reduce the number of illnesses and negative effects that could occur in our community. General guidance and additional resources are provided below.*

## **General Guidance**

### **Personal Hygiene**

- More hand washing; less face touching. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Regular use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer covering all surfaces of the hands and rubbing them together until dry will decrease risk that the virus is transmitted to you or other people.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.

#### **Be Prepared at Home**

- Have a plan to care for family members should they get sick or schools/offices be closed.
- Know your workplace telecommute options and school/daycare policies.
- Stock up on food supplies and prescription medications now, so you don't have to leave your home if you or someone in your household becomes infected.

## **Additional Resources**

### **For the General Public**

- [Novel Coronavirus Fact Sheet](#) (available in 11 languages)
- [How Can I Be Prepared for a COVID-19 Outbreak](#) Washington State Dept. of Health
- [Community and Community Organization Resources and Recommendations](#) Washington State Dept. of Health
- Printable Poster: [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)

### **For Schools**

- [Guidance for Administrators of US Child Care programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare and Respond to Coronavirus Disease](#) CDC

- [Information for School Nurses and Administrators](#) Washington State Dept. of Health

#### For Workplaces and Employers

- [Workplace Recommendations](#) Washington State Dept. of Health
- [Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) CDC

#### For Health Care Professionals

- [Information for Healthcare Professionals including Health Alert Network Updates, Interim Guidance for Care, and Publications](#) CDC
- [Health Care Provider Resources and Recommendations](#) Washington State Dept. of Health

#### For Senior Centers

- [Senior Center Administrator and Employee Resources and Recommendations](#) Washington State Dept. of Health

#### For Travelers

- [Coronavirus, Travel and the Changing Situation](#) *Public Health Insider*
- [Health Alert for Travelers from China in English and Chinese](#) CDC
- [Travel Health Notices](#) CDC

The Washington State Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. If you have questions about what is happening in Washington State, how the virus is spread, and what to do if you have symptoms, please call 1-800-525-0127 and press #.

**Additional Updates** are available from the [Federal CDC](#) and [Washington Dept. of Health](#)

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ISLAND COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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Administration, PO Box 5000, Coupeville, WA 98239

The district continues to follow the guidance of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Public Health Island County in our response to COVID-19.

For up to date information and additional resources including how to stay healthy, visit our coronavirus disease 2019 webpage:

[https://www.sw.wednet.edu/families/health\\_services/corona\\_virus](https://www.sw.wednet.edu/families/health_services/corona_virus)

We are committed to keeping you informed and working with you to keep our school communities safe.

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