



A message from South Whidbey School District

February 3, 2020

The White House Coronavirus Task Force announced on January 31, 2020 that all people returning from China will be asked to stay at home away from others and monitor their health for 14 days. If your child has returned from China, they must be retained at home for 14 days before returning to school.

At this time, the immediate risk to the general public in Washington and the United States is considered to be low. There is no evidence that 2019-nCoV is spreading in Washington at this time.

We are aware of rumors circulating about students in Snohomish County schools having novel coronavirus. This is not true. At this time, no youth have been tested for coronavirus, and there are no additional confirmed cases.

This rumor is an opportunity for helpful reminders, including steps people can take to reduce their risk of getting any viral respiratory infections:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces
- Stay at home away from others if you are sick
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands

As you may know, China is experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus (2019-nCoV). This virus emerged in Hubei Province, China in December 2019. The virus is spreading from person-to-person, and cases have been detected in a number of countries internationally and the United States, including [one case in Washington](#) on January 21, 2020. The Washington case occurred in a Snohomish County resident who had recently traveled to Wuhan.

Coronaviruses are primarily spread through respiratory droplets, which means to become infected, people generally have to be within six feet of someone who is contagious for an extended period of time, and have droplets land on them. This is very different from airborne diseases like measles, so the public health response is different.

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 #.

More information is available from the Washington Department of Health:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus/Schools>