

March 3, 2020

Dear Families,

We have been receiving information from the Washington State Department of Health and the North Central Educational Service District about the Novel Coronavirus. Cashmere School District is also collaborating with Cashmere Medical Center in case of a possible future outbreak. There is no reason to be overly alarmed, but it is also good to be prepared.

The symptoms of the Novel Coronavirus are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. It is spread in a similar way as the flu, such as coughing and sneezing. Kids tend to have a less severe disease. It is a serious public health threat and the overall strategy is to reduce the spread of the virus. To reduce risk, we are asking for students to stay home when they are sick, avoid close contact with people who are sick, wash their hands regularly, avoid touching their face, and cover their coughs and sneezes. One additional recommendation is to use Clorox hydrogen peroxide for disinfection purposes in your home. Handwashing is better than using hand sanitizer, but if you use hand sanitizer, it is recommended that you use one with at least 60% alcohol.

Although there are some new cases in King County, at this time, they are not recommending cancellation or avoidance of mass public gatherings for healthy individuals. However, they are recommending enhanced precautions, which means washing hands, avoiding people who are sick, and not attending these gatherings if you are sick. They also said that you might want to err on the side of caution if you are immune compromised or vulnerable and avoid mass public gatherings.

With mid-winter break starting this week, district maintenance, custodial and transportation staff will be able to complete a "deep clean" of all facilities and buses to further reduce risk. Depending on how the illness continues to spread and how it could impact our school district, there may be some additional mitigation strategies in the future.

You can get more information from the Washington State Department of Health at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus> and the Center for Disease Control at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. You may also be interested in planning resources at https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/prepareyourhealth/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcp%2Fareyouprepared%2Findex.htm. Also, here is a link to frequently asked questions and answers about the Coronavirus Disease-2019 and Children: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>.

If you have additional questions, please reach out to our school nurse Amber Varrelman at avarrelman@cashmere.wednet.edu. We will keep you updated as we receive additional information.

Sincerely,
Glenn Johnson
Superintendent