

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

The health, safety and well-being of our students and staff are our highest priorities. As such, with the recently elevated discussion regarding the Coronavirus and public institutions, including schools, we want to reinforce best-practice preventative safety measures, as well as share decision-making and communication plans in the extreme event of a virus infection affecting Hawthorn District 73.

As you know, COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is presenting challenges both here in the United States and around the globe. Information about the spread of the disease is changing every day. You may learn more about COVID-19 by visiting the District's website at www.hawthorn73.org for information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Lake County Health Department (LCHD).

The best ways to prevent the spread of illnesses both at school and at home are to practice good hand hygiene, monitor symptoms, and keep children at home if they are feeling ill. Everyone and especially children should regularly wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to help prevent the spread of diseases like COVID-19. Please take a moment to view the short videos highlighting the proper way to wash hands posted on the CDC's website at <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/videos.html>.

The District 73 Facilities Department staff are already following recommended winter season deep-cleaning and sanitizing protocols at all District 73 facilities, including daily cleaning and sanitizing routines with use of winter season-related cleaning and sanitizing products. Given the continued realities of the Coronavirus threat, the Facilities Department team will continue to follow daily cleaning and sanitizing procedures for the foreseeable future. The Facilities Department leadership team continues to work closely with our custodial provider, GSF, a well-established national cleaning service provider to hospitals, schools and businesses. GSF has established a Coronavirus Response Committee to monitor the virus, adapting procedures and cleaning products as warranted across its client base, including District 73.

For those families that are preparing to travel over spring break, please be aware of the specific guidance from the CDC concerning anyone traveling to or from an area of the world determined to be a Level 3 Travel Health Notice location. These regulations may be found on the CDC website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>.

If you return home from a designated Level 3 Travel Health Notice location, the CDC advises that you and your children stay home for 14 days from the time you left the area. The CDC also recommends that you practice social distancing and take these steps to monitor your family's health:

- Take your child's temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also watch for cough or trouble breathing.
- Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not send your child to school for this 14-day period. Contact your child's school before returning to school.
- Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares during the time you are practicing social distancing.
- Avoid crowded places (such as shopping centers and movie theaters) and limit your activities in public.
- Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).

Student absences for the purpose of an at-home voluntary 14-day quarantine will be counted as excused absences, and students will be able to make-up all homework, quizzes and tests without penalty.

Lastly, as the school district prepares for "what if" scenarios related to the COVID-19 outbreak, we encourage families to do the same. Please give thought to childcare plans and/or alternate work plans should your child need to stay home from school due to illness or school closures. The District may have to cancel classes or close a school or schools due to the impact of a local COVID-19 outbreak. Prior to any decision to close a school or schools, the District would consult with the Lake County Health Department (LCHD) concerning their guidance and recommendation. The cancellation of schools due to COVID-19 would be considered an emergency school closing day.

Please know that the District has been and continues to investigate alternate educational options should school closures become frequent or long-term due to a local COVID-19 outbreak. However, the process to implement alternate educational options such as remote learning days is heavily regulated by the state and will require time to develop and implement. The District does not have a projected implementation date as of this time.

District 73 will continue to follow guidance from the state and county health departments regarding COVID-19, and we will share important information with you as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

Peter Hannigan, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools