Coronavirus FAQ

Do any District 73 students or staff have the coronavirus?
At this time, no students or staff are known to have the coronavirus.

What are common symptoms of coronavirus?
People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms include fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

How does the virus spread?
This virus is thought to spread the same way seasonal flu spreads, which is primarily through respiratory droplets: coughing, sneezing, and touching respiratory droplets on yourself, another person or an object, then touching mucus membranes (e.g., mouth, nose, eyes) without washing hands.

What can I do to prevent coronavirus?
Students and staff can reduce their risk for getting and spreading viral respiratory infections, including the flu and the common cold, by taking simple steps, which will also prevent coronavirus. These include:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a sleeve or a tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Are students being required to wash their hands more than usual?
We have directed staff to remind students that the best practice for preventing the spread of illness includes proper handwashing. Posters reinforcing proper handwashing and coughing are hanging in every classroom and bathroom. As always, students will be reminded to wash their hands before eating and after using the bathroom.

Who should seek medical evaluation for coronavirus?
If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first. Do not go to the emergency room. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs. If you have difficulty breathing, it doesn't mean you have novel coronavirus, but you should call 9-1-1. If you are over 60 and you have underlying conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease, come up with a plan with your doctor to identify your health risks for coronavirus and how to manage symptoms. Contact your doctor right away if you do have symptoms.

Are you screening students and staff for coronavirus?
Guidance from health authorities is that it is not necessary to screen all students and staff for coronavirus. However, staff should be alert for students and staff who have a cough, fever and/or difficulty breathing and have recently returned from **international locations** where community spread is occurring or have had contact with someone being evaluated for COVID-19. If that situation arises:

- Keep the student away from others until a family member can take them home. Staff should be sent home.
- Alert your school nurse.

When should I keep my child home from school?
If children are vomiting or have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), they will be sent home and parents will be advised to keep sick children home for at least 24 hours after they stop vomiting or do not show signs of fever without using fever-reducing drugs (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

How long are sick children required to stay home?
The CDC is currently recommending that patients with confirmed COVID-19 remain under home isolation until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation is made on

a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments. At this time, we do not have any identified cases in District 73.

If I keep my child home from school due to concerns about coronavirus, will the absence be excused?
As a parent, it is up to your judgement to keep your child home due to a health concern. Some children and staff may be at higher risk for severe illness because of underlying health conditions or a weakened immune system. If you decide to keep your child home, the absence will be excused. If your child is absent from school due to illness or safety concerns, your child's teacher will provide assignments and opportunities for learning.

I'm concerned about my child who has a health condition. What can I do?
Some children and staff may be at higher risk for severe illness because of underlying health conditions or a weakened immune system. Families should consult with their healthcare provider to decide the best course of action. If you decide to keep your child home, the absence will be excused. If your child is absent from school due to illness or safety concerns, your child's teacher will provide assignments and opportunities for learning.

Can I wear a mask?
Yes, you may wear a mask at school. However, please be advised that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) does not currently recommend that people wear masks when they are in public.

How does District 73 clean and disinfect?
The CDC is currently recommending routine cleaning. In District 73, doorknobs, light switches, drinking fountains, banisters, bathrooms and sinks in classrooms are being cleaned every night. Desktops and cafeteria tables are also being cleaned every day, either by the lunch supervisors or by the custodians. There are bottles of cleaner/disinfectant in every classroom for staff to use as necessary. We have custodians at our schools during the day and at night who are dedicated to keeping the buildings healthy for our students. However, should we have an outbreak at one of our schools, a team of custodians would be sent to the school to do a deep cleaning overnight.

How is District 73 preparing for the possibility of widespread illness?
We are developing contingency plans so we are ready to respond if widespread illness causes greater impacts. These plans include responses to significant staff absences, school closures, or other circumstances that affect our ability to operate school as usual. We are hopeful that we will not have to operationalize these plans, but it is critical to be prepared.

Will District 73 cancel school?
District 73 works closely with the Lake County Department of Public Health and Illinois Department of Public Health. Any decision to close a school would be based on information we receive from those medical professionals. Currently we are not aware of any coronavirus cases in our community.

If school is canceled, will we have to make up the school days?
The last day of school in District 73 is currently Tuesday, June 2. District 73 can extend school through Tuesday, June 9 using the five emergency days (similar to what we do when we have a snow day). If the public health departments advise us to close schools, make-up days will be added to the end of the school year. In the case of an extended closure, we could apply for a state waiver for some of those days.

We feel anxious about coronavirus. What can I do?
It is natural to be concerned about a new illness. Remember that according to our state and local health departments, the risk to the District 73 community and to the U.S. population as a whole is currently low. If you would like to talk with someone, the following mental health services are available to students and staff:

- Students can talk with their school counselor or school nurse.
- Staff can access the Employee Assistance Program.

Do you have resources I can use to talk about the coronavirus with my child?
As adults, it's important we remain calm with our actions and words, and share factual information. Sharing accurate information during a time of heightened concern is critical. One of the ways we can protect our community from illness is to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

Here are some resources you may use to talk about the coronavirus with children:

- **National Association of School Psychologists Parent Resource – Talking to Children About COVID-19**

Where can I find more information about the coronavirus?
This is an evolving situation. Stay up to date by consulting the following webpages:

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
- **Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)**
- **Lake County Health Department (LCHD)**