

March 2020

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## March is Disability Awareness Month

Students have been exposed to various learning opportunities about disabilities this month. As we conclude the month, we will have a week of special "Spirit Days".

### Monday – March 23<sup>rd</sup>

**"Relax, Be Cool"**

Wear sweats or pajamas

### Tuesday – March 24<sup>th</sup>

**"Our Future is Bright"**

Wear your favorite college apparel

### Wednesday – March 25<sup>th</sup>

**"Be a Team Player"**

Wear your favorite sport team apparel

### Thursday – March 26<sup>th</sup>

**"Light it Up Blue"**

Wear blue

### Friday – March 27<sup>th</sup>

**"We Support Each Other"**

Wear disability awareness apparel or tie-dye or Pirate spirit wear/purple

John Wood Elementary School  
6100 E. 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
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(219) 650-5305  
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# The John Wood Parent Newsletter



## Principal Petralia's Page

Dear Families,

I hope everyone is doing well during this strange time. I know you have been working really hard on the electronic work that your teachers have been preparing and continue to prepare for you. We had a staff meeting Monday morning to finalize how this would look for John Wood and I have to tell you that the teamwork and problem solving from our staff was remarkable. I watched them come together with a common goal of keeping your education a priority and it brought tears to my eyes.

Our teachers have expressed how much they miss being at school already. They miss you and a daily routine. Some of them have left their comfort zones and created Facebooks pages for read alouds. I want to make sure to share those with you so you can add those pages to your daily work.

Mrs. Pace, first grade teacher, has Pace Reads where she will be live every day. Miss Welsh, first grade teacher, has Welsh Reads and she will be reading each day at 2:30. Mrs. Gates, our title one teacher, has Gates Reads and she will be reading on Mondays. Mrs. Foster, second grade teacher, has Foster Reads on Sundays at 8:00pm. I will be working with my family tomorrow to create our own read aloud and that will also be shared with you.

I want to let you know that I miss your smiling faces each day! Thank you for your hard work at home. We had 96% of our fourth graders turn in their work from yesterday. That's awesome! Keep up the great work. Also remember that our platforms like Google Classroom and Class Kick are for educational purposes only so if you are chatting with classmates, make sure it's school appropriate.

Mrs. Petralia

## John Wood School **BEST** Pledge

John Wood is the **BEST** of schools,  
Spell out **BEST** you'll know the rules,  
First is **B**, that's the way.  
**Be** responsible every day.  
Next is **E**, that's correct.  
**E**veryone deserves respect.  
Third is **S**. This is cool.  
**S**afety counts when you're at school.  
Finally, it's letter **T**.  
We will **T**alk appropriately.

## Good Citizens February 2020

### ECD

Jameis Johnson –  
Miss McCorkle (Miss Kati)

### Kindergarten

Abigail Cuevas – Mrs. Anderson  
Blake Healy – Mrs. Scott  
Mateo Blancarte – Mrs. Shalla

### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

Lilianna Arellano – Mrs. Matthews  
Tatyana Nevarez-Martin – Mrs. Pace  
Liam Fitzsimmons – Miss Welsh

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

Jaylah Hughes – Mrs. Carney  
Mannix Gannaban – Ms. Foster  
Shamir Fenner – Mrs. Marshall

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

Izaiha Frost – Mrs. Busch  
Adam Koszyk – Mrs. Cseke  
Abigail Velasco – Mrs. Mahy

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Joshua Newton – Miss Jongsma  
Aniyah Powell – Miss Vlassopoulos

## February Attendance

As we continue to encourage good attendance, we would like to recognize the class who had the best attendance during the month of February. Mrs. Busch's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class had 98.83% attendance! They have the honor of keeping the "Beary" attendance award in their room for this month and received a small prize!

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Music Program

The second-grade music program is Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Our theme is based on the book "The Day the Crayons Quit." The students have had fun learning "colorful" songs. Students will be demonstrating the musical skills learned and practiced throughout the school year. Everyone is invited to attend the performance.

## Curt Hoffman Scholarship

A \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a graduating senior from MHS who also attended John Wood Elementary School for a minimum of three years. Students who were in the Honors Program are eligible provided they lived in the John Wood School district during those years.

Interested students need to ask for an application in the MHS guidance office. The deadline to turn in applications is March 27, 2020. **Due to school closure, at this time the deadline is being extended to April 17<sup>th</sup>.**

This scholarship was created in memory of Mr. Curt Hoffman. Mr. Hoffman was principal of John Wood School from 1989-1998, when he lost his battle with cancer.

## Girls on the Run

We are excited to announce that we have 17 third- and fourth-grade girls who have registered to join the spring session of Girls on the Run. The girls are meeting with the coaches twice a week. They are learning positive life-skills and preparing for a 5K run in May. Good luck, girls!

### Coaches

Mrs. Mansfield  
Mrs. Pace  
Mrs. Robbins  
Miss Fleming  
Mrs. Shallow

### Participants

Brooke Bishop  
Serenity Bishop  
Erica Byers  
Piper Denisiuk  
Harmony Fenner  
Yuliani Fuentes  
Mai Goodman  
Amanda Hubbard  
Lashanda Hubbard  
Daisy Huizar  
Cherie Levesque  
Natalie Nelson  
Leilani Rodriguez  
Lexiana Roop  
Olivia Tanzymore  
Jordyn Triplett  
Haleigh Tucker

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Honor Roll 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester

### Mrs. Busch A Honor Roll

Isabella Balbosa

### A/B Honor Roll

Antonio Byers  
Alaina Conn  
Alexander Moreland

### Mrs. Cseke A/B Honor Roll

Lilianna Batista  
Sofia Foster  
Dreamm Mable  
Lucas Mahy

### Mrs. Mahy A Honor Roll

Jian Peng Zheng

### A/B Honor Roll

Aliyah Lagunas  
Alina Magana  
Lexiana Roop  
Abigail Velasco

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Roll 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester

### Miss Jongsma A/B Honor Roll

Daisy Huizar  
Fiona Mick  
David Mihal  
Tithi Prajapati  
Haleigh Tucker

### Miss Vlassopoulos A/B Honor Roll

Salma Alsamawi  
Gabriela Cabrera  
Marissa Ronning  
Aniyah Powell  
Olivia Tanzymore  
Jori Terpstra

## PTO News

Our next PTO meeting will be on Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2:30 p.m. We are preparing for a new and different end-of-year event!! Come help be part of the planning!

### Box Tops/Coca-Cola Codes

Our spring box top submission has been mailed in and we are expecting a check for about \$165. That will bring our final total for the 2019-2020 school year to about \$400. This is less than half of what we usually receive from box tops.

As more and more products switch over to digital box tops, we will receive less and less physical clips. Only about \$75 of our total is from parents using the app to submit receipts for the new digital box tops. The only way for us to bring this number up is to download the app and scan EVERY receipt as soon as you can. You never know...those Paper Mate pens you picked up at Office Depot or the Lysol spray you bought at Menards (or maybe even the dollar store) might qualify! Remember, receipts must be scanned within 14 days of the purchase. Why not make it part of the routine as you unpack your purchases? You can even put your children be in charge of reminding you!

### We Need You!

Our PTO currently is being run by only a few parents and staff. We are desperate to find help! Our volunteers get burned out quickly when they end up doing everything. It can be so much easier if we have more people helping. Many of our meetings this year have been attended by only one or two parents and we had one meeting where no parents came.

Without parents stepping up to take charge, we risk losing our PTO completely. Without a PTO, John Wood's classrooms and students would lose:

- Annual family events like our BINGO/Movie Night and Game Night. We have already lost evenings at local restaurants, the Valentine Dance and Fun Fair because of the lack of volunteers...
- Student Cook-Out, VIP (Grandparents) Day, Book Fair...
- Additions to the classroom libraries, Scholastic News, Young Hoosier books...
- Student gifts and prizes for contests...
- Various recess equipment, field trips, school assemblies, guest visits...
- Classroom/Student rewards for academics and behavior...
- Student/Teacher appreciation gifts and prizes...

...and so much more!

If you are interested in helping to continue our PTO next year, please attend one of our PTO meetings. If you can't make the meeting, you can send a note to school with your child expressing your interest. Make sure to include the best way to contact you and remember to mark the envelope "PTO".

## Dress Code Reminder

As we begin to have warm days, we are all excited to shed our coats and start wearing warm-weather clothing after the long and cold winter. However, please remember that we have a dress code at John Wood.

The dress code includes no shorts or skirts shorter than fingertip length, no sheer or see-through clothing, no "spaghetti strap" or strapless tops, and no bare midriffs. Also, we ask that the children do not wear flip-flops. If a child is wearing flip-flops, he/she will go outside for fresh air, but will not be allowed on the playground equipment.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

## Upcoming Events

**March 15-27**

### **IREAD Testing Window**

Third-graders will be taking the IREAD test during this time period. We would like to remind you that attendance is important on these days. One of the best things you can do to prepare your child for this test is to make sure they get a good night's sleep and eat a nourishing breakfast.

**March 18**

### **Major Saver Fulfillment Begins**

Today is the first day that a rep will be at the school to begin filling orders. Do not send orders before this day. Remember that payment must be included before a card will be sent home. See the article on page 4 for more details.

**March 19**

### **Early Dismissal – 1:25 p.m.**

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

**March 23-27**

### **Disability Awareness Spirit Week**

See the section on page 1 for the list of Spirit Days. The list is also on the March Activity Calendar that went home with students.

**March 24**

### **Second-Grade Music Program**

#### **Multi-Purpose Room, 6:00 p.m.**

Our second-graders have been busy practicing and tonight is the night that they will be performing for family and friends. The students have worked hard learning songs about the theme "The Day the Crayons Quit" and are excited to share these songs with everyone. See the article on page 2 for more information about this program.

**March 25**

### **Major Saver Ends**

Today is the last day the rep will be in our building to fill orders for Major Saver cards.

**March 26**

### **Spring Pictures**

Photographers will be at John Wood this morning to take fun and casual portraits. Only students who return the envelope with a payment will have their photo taken.

**March 26**

### **Early Dismissal – 1:25 p.m.**

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

**March 30-April 3**

### **Spring Break**

No school for all students. Have a restful break! School resumes on Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.

continued on page five

# Perfect Attendance 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester 2019-2020

## Kindergarten

Drake Ameling  
Amelia Dulla  
Emma Escobar  
Isabel Langstraat  
\*Peter Moore  
\*Hyde Smith

## 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

Brody Finnearty  
Stella Finnearty  
Dani Hart  
Kaelyn Kitchens  
\*Keiridon Mays  
Jaxon Mick  
Sebastian Ortiz  
Michael Scalzitti

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

Brooklyn Holly  
\*Tanya Johnson-Vazquez  
Isabella Lagunas  
\*Gabriella Rusk  
\*Atlas Theodorakos

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

Isabella Balbosa  
Mea Blancarte  
Alaina Conn  
Izaiha Frost  
Adam Koszyk  
Lucas Mahy  
\*Roxanna Monita  
\*Earsh Peden  
Melody Vera  
\*Jian Peng Zheng

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Yassmin Aboelezz  
Victoria Manning  
Tithi Prajapati  
Marissa Ronning

\* - denotes Perfect Attendance for both trimesters.

# Small Card, BIG Results

## Merrillville Education Foundation Major Saver Campaign

The Merrillville Education Foundation is excited to be offering Major Saver cards for sale through the Merrillville schools. Students will receive the sales packets starting Thursday, March 12, 2020. The sale will last approximately two weeks. Proceeds from the sale of Major Saver cards directly support all the schools and the activities of the Merrillville Education Foundation. All the money generated from this fundraiser goes back to the children. In this way John Wood School can fund innovative and creative projects in the classroom and school and allow students to have broad educational experiences.

From 2002-2019 since the Merrillville Education Foundation started, Wood School has been awarded \$40,083.95 in teacher grants and Major Saver fundraising.

Major Saver cards can be purchased via cash, check or online at [www.majorsaver.com](http://www.majorsaver.com). The online sale can be credited back to a particular student and school. All cards purchased online will be mailed directly to the customer. Administrators, Teachers, and MCSC Employees can also purchase cards to support this initiative.

The Major Saver App is now LOADED with THOUSANDS of offers valid NATIONWIDE!! Your Major Saver card will come with a code so you can download and access these deals. You're no longer limited to just savings in the Merrillville area. Going to Chicago or Indianapolis for the weekend? Open your app and take advantage of savings there too!!

Major Saver is making online sales easier for friends and family! On our homepage you are able to enter your student's information to create a CUSTOM LINK for your child that can be shared via social media

or email. This link will automatically credit the online sale to your student when friends and family use the link to make their purchase!

Major Saver stresses safe selling and discourages door to door campaigning. The company encourages students to sell to family members, church patrons, neighbors, or other adults the family may know; and to always make sure their parents are involved.

Please consider purchasing one or more Major Saver cards this year to help benefit the Merrillville Education Foundation and the students within the district.

Thank you for your continued support! Be ready for the Major Saver 2020 card coming soon!

## Social Media

Did you know that there are several ways that you can keep updated about what is going on in our school and in the corporation? In addition to Class Dojo, Seesaw, Skyward, emails, phone calls and paper notes that go home with students, there are social media sites. **During our unscheduled "break", make sure to watch these sites for more information.**

## Twitter

### MCSC Superintendent

Mr. Nick Brown

@MerrillvilleSu3

### John Wood Principal

Mrs. Alison Petralia

@PrinPetralia

### John Wood PTO

@PtoWood

## Facebook

### Merrillville Community School Corporation

[www.facebook.com/merrillvilleschools/](http://www.facebook.com/merrillvilleschools/)

### John Wood PTO

[www.facebook.com/johnwood.pto](http://www.facebook.com/johnwood.pto)

In addition, MCSC now has a new and improved mobile app! It is available in both the Apple and Google Play stores.



## Music in Our Schools Month

March is Music in Our Schools Month. This is a good time to draw attention to the importance of music education. Music is included as a stand-alone academic subject in the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act, the 2015 federal law covering K-12 public education).

Music education helps students academically in several ways. The combined results of 30 studies indicate that music instruction has a significant positive effect on reading. Music study helps tune the brain's auditory system which helps students recognize speech and letter sounds. Students who continue music throughout high school scored an average of 91 points higher on the SAT test. (College Board, 2009 data) Students who participate in high quality music programs score higher on standardized tests than students in schools with deficient music programs, regardless of socioeconomic level. (Journal of Research in Music Education, 2007) Schools with strong music programs have higher graduation and attendance rates than schools that do not. A recent study showed that 10 years of instrumental study as a child can improve your memory in old age. These are just a few examples of the benefits of music education.

Music teaches lessons that are not taught elsewhere. Music education helps develop emotional awareness, self-reflection and self-discipline. In music, students learn skills that are important for achieving future success, including curiosity, creativity, and collaboration. In addition, music teaches the importance of hard work and persistence. One must work hard, practice, and persevere to succeed.

Music helps educate the whole child. Support the role of music education in your child's schooling. For more information, go to <https://nafme.org/advocacy/>.

## Pop Tab Collection

To many, a pop tab is just a piece of aluminum with one purpose – to open a can. But to the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana, the pop tab is a valuable resource. Why? Collected pop tabs are recycled, generating much-needed funds to support the Ronald McDonald House and the nearly 1,500 families we serve each year.

How can you help? John Wood School is now collecting pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House. Simply remove the pop tab from the aluminum can and put them in your favorite collection container. When you are ready to send them to school, just put them in a Ziploc-type bag and send them with your child. There's no competition, no goal, no prizes...just the gift of compassion.

## The Coaches' Corner

Ms. Copeland, Mrs. Pozdzel,  
Mrs. Rassbach, Miss Zorich

### HOW DO I HELP MY CHILD WHEN THE HOMEWORK IS SO DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I DID IN SCHOOL?

Homework may look different from when you were in school and the amount of it may be different also. Practice is still important and students continue to do that.

Students will still be expected to memorize basic facts, and you'll still see homework that asks you to help them do that. But, we know from research that students need activities and tasks that allow for a deeper understanding of the math.

These tasks may take longer to solve and so fewer problems are assigned. But these problems will help students understand how integral math is in their lives and will continue to be in the workplace.

## Upcoming Events – Cont.

Continued from page three

**April 7 & 8**

### **2020-2021 Kindergarten Registration**

Have a child who will be starting kindergarten next year? These two days have been set aside for families to register for next year's Kindergarten class. There is a flyer attached to this newsletter with more information. Please feel free to pass along this information as needed.

**April 9**

### **Early Dismissal – 1:25 p.m.**

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

**April 10**

### **No School – Good Friday**

**April 16**

### **Early Dismissal – 1:25 p.m.**

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

**April 20-May 15**

### **ILEARN Testing Window**

All third- and fourth-graders will take this test, which replaced the ISTEP+ Test, on these days. We would like to remind you that attendance is important on these days. One of the best things you can do to prepare your child for these tests is to make sure they get a good night's sleep and eat a nourishing breakfast.

**April 22**

### **PTO Meeting**

**2:30, Cafeteria**

Join us as we finalize plans for our end-of-year event. See the article on page 3.

**April 23**

### **Early Dismissal – 1:25 p.m.**

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

**April 30**

### **Early Dismissal – 1:25 p.m.**

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

### **Reminder**

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call and let the school office know why a child is not in school. Make sure you call 650-5305 then press 2 before 9 a.m. if your child will not be in school.



# Merrillville Schools Kindergarten Registration

*Register your  
child for the  
2020-21 school year  
at either of these events.  
Your child must be  
age 5 by Aug. 1, 2020.*

**Tuesday, April 7  
3-8 p.m.**

**Wednesday, April 8  
9 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Iddings Elementary School**

7249 Van Buren St. Enter through Door E

*Registration  
for all five  
schools held  
at one  
location!*

**Please bring your child and the necessary documentation including:**

- \* Driver's license or state ID;
- \* Copy of your most recent utility bill;
- \* Copy of your lease, mortgage statement or deed;
- \* Child's immunization record.
- \* Child's State Board of Health birth certificate;
- \* Additional details available on our website [www.mvsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us).

**At these events you'll be able to...**

- \* Learn about your kindergartener's daily schedule and activities.
- \* Talk with school nurses and representatives from food services, the transportation dept. and media services.
- \* Discover how to engage with the PTO.
- \* Gather information from Head Start and area businesses.
- \* Enjoy fun activities with your children!
- \* Connect with the Adventure Club (before and after-school care).

For more information, call the  
Merrillville Community School  
Corporation (219) 650-5300, or visit us  
at [www.mvsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us)



# KINDERGARTEN





## Tips for Helping Children With Reading Comprehension Difficulties

By Wendy C. Ward, M.A.T.

Does your child have difficulty remembering or understanding what he/she reads? If your child reads slowly and struggles with words that should be familiar, then it is probable that your child does not comprehend what he/she is reading. As your child progresses through school, the inability to read comprehensively affects how he/she gains knowledge. Below are strategies to assist parents in improving their child's reading comprehension skills.



### Improve Decoding Skills

In order for children to understand what they read, they must first be able to read words on the page. They must be aware of letters and the sounds they make and understand that they must blend these sounds to make words. This is decoding. Good readers determine if the words they read make sense in a sentence. If the words do not make sense, they go back and try reading those words again. Prompt your child when he/she reads a word incorrectly by asking, "Does that word make sense in the sentence?" If he/she responds "no," have the child decode the word(s) and reread the sentence.

### Improve Vocabulary Skills

Reading comprehension improves when a child understands vocabulary words in their context. As your child reads, have him/her make a flashcard for each unfamiliar or difficult word. Help your child look up the meaning of the word in the dictionary or glossary and talk about its meaning in the context of the sentence.

### Improve Active Comprehension Strategies

Good readers use strategies to prepare themselves for reading a particular text. These strategies may include:

- Making predictions while they are reading.
- Making connections to what they already know.
- Determining the meanings of unfamiliar words based on context clues.
- Interpreting the text (following printed directions, understanding a sequence of events, understanding and interpreting the mood of the story and feelings of the characters).
- Generalizing how the ideas revealed in the text may apply to future readings (a chronicle of historical or scientific events).

Struggling readers have difficulty with all of the skills above and require more instructional time and practice. Below are general activities to do with your child at home to improve active reading comprehension skills. Help and encourage your child to prepare to read for pleasure or complete classroom assignments using the tips below.

- "Walk" through the story (or assignment) page by page and look at pictures, illustrations, headers, sidebars, etc. This helps the child prepare for the information he/she is about to read as well as improve comprehension and concentration.

- Separate what the child is reading into story grammar components: setting, main character, action, and outcome.
- Take turns reading aloud and find places to stop, discuss, make comments, give opinions, and relate to personal experiences. When parents read aloud, they should model correct inflection and feelings.
- Listen to your child read aloud for a few minutes every day. The length of time should be appropriate for the child's age (a minute for every year of age). The book he/she is reading aloud should be at a level slightly below his/her classroom instruction in order to foster reading fluency. Ask your child's teacher for a suggested booklist.
- Reread favorite books. Rereading familiar books provides good practice for fluency and decoding. Your child should be able to read at a smooth, conversational pace.
- Read aloud to your child often from a book, magazine, or newspaper article. This helps build vocabulary. Ask questions frequently about the content and details, and ask him/her to retell the story to check the level of understanding.
- Talk about what your child reads to you. This helps him/her remember and think through the themes of the book. Ask your child questions about the content of the book before, during, and after reading. Use pictures or illustrations to extend discussion about the story or topic.
- Explore different forms of reading material. Take a trip to the library; check out a book and its companion audio tape or CD. Have your child read aloud with the narrator of the book while listening to the text on tape or CD. This helps the child learn to emulate inflection and feeling.
- Provide age-appropriate magazines! Children will read books and magazines over and over when it's something of interest to them. Larger bookstores have a huge selection of books and magazines spanning from sports to doll collecting. Allow your child to choose his/her reading material by providing several choices and allowing him/her to make the final decision.
- Find popular children's books that are now available as screenplays on video or DVD. Have your child read the book version and then, watch the screenplay. Talk about the similarities or differences between the book and the screenplay. Ask your child how the screenplay compares to what he/she visualized while reading the book.



It is extremely important that parents are active, encouraging, involved, and most of all, setting the example that reading is important. Consult your child's teacher for information and guidance in selecting the appropriate level of reading materials outside the classroom. Ask him/her for other helpful reading strategies to ensure that your child is getting all the help he/she needs to become a successful reader.

#### Resources

- Williams, Joanna. (2000). Improving comprehension for students with LD. *LD Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.ldonline.org/article/86>
- Baumel, Jan. (2002). *Learning to read – Research informs us*. Retrieved from <http://www.schwablearning.org>
- Pressley, Michael. (2000). Comprehension instruction: What works. *LD Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.ldonline.org/article/88>





## MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

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Brad Best  
Director Security

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Director Media Services

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Director Health Services

Gregory Giffen  
Director  
Building and Grounds

Colleen Horstler  
Director  
Food Services

Jane Quanza  
Athletic Director

### BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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Member

March 13, 2019

Merrillville Community School Corporation Families,

Out of an abundance of caution and utilizing preemptive measures due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), in collaboration with state and local authorities, the Merrillville Community School Corporation will be closed starting Monday, March 16, 2020 through Friday, April 10, 2020.

After closely monitoring the situation, consulting with medical experts, and giving careful consideration to what is best for our students, staff, and the community we serve, the determination has been made to close all schools effective Monday, March 16, 2020.

Contingency plans will be put in place to ensure that uninterrupted learning experiences will be available for our students. You will receive additional information regarding what to expect, detailed logistics, and where to find important updates. That additional information will include eLearning days, waiver days, and events that have been cancelled that may be able to be rescheduled if conditions lend themselves to improvement. You can find important updates by visiting the Merrillville Community School Corporation's website: <https://www.mvsc.k12.in.us/Content2/coronavirus>.

Although we know this may cause challenges for our families, it is essential for us to prioritize health and safety by implementing our pandemic plans and doing everything we can to support our community throughout this quickly evolving health emergency.

This measure to close schools is being implemented to slow the spread of the virus by social isolation and distancing. For this reason, it is encouraged that staff and students not go out into public spaces frequently or large gatherings during the closure time.

Our district will remain in close collaboration with federal, state, and local authorities during this closure. More information about COVID-19 is available at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm> or [www.cdc.gov/covid-19](http://www.cdc.gov/covid-19).

If you have questions or concerns regarding the Coronavirus, please contact your primary healthcare provider or the Lake County Board of Health at (219) 755-3655. The Indiana State Department of Health can be contacted at (317) 233-7125 or after-hours at (317) 233-1325.

Enclosed in this communication are some important tips on what to do if you suspect you have the virus or are experiencing symptoms, and safety precautions to stay healthy during this time. The Merrillville community will be strong and work together to get through this health emergency.

Sincerely,

Nicholas G. Brown, Ed.S.  
Superintendent of Schools

*"Every child. Every day. Whatever it takes."*

## Keeping the home safe

Encourage your family members to...

### All households



- Clean hands at the door and at regular intervals
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching their face and cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, and handrails regularly
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

### Households with vulnerable seniors or those with significant underlying conditions



*Significant underlying conditions include heart, lung, kidney disease; diabetes; and conditions that suppress the immune system*

- Have the healthy people in the household conduct themselves as if they were a significant risk to the person with underlying conditions. For example, wash hands frequently before interacting with the person, such as by feeding or caring for the person
- If possible, provide a protected space for vulnerable household members
- Ensure all utensils and surfaces are cleaned regularly

### Households with sick family members



- Give sick members their own room if possible, and keep the door closed
- Have only one family member care for them
- Consider providing additional protections or more intensive care for household members over 65 years old or with underlying conditions

**What every American and community can do now to decrease the spread of the coronavirus**

## Keeping the school safe

Encourage your faculty, staff, and students to...

### Practice good hygiene



- Stop handshaking— use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Clean hands at the door and at regular intervals
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching their faces and cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

### Consider rearranging large activities and gatherings



- Consider adjusting or postponing gatherings that mix between classes and grades
- Adjust after-school arrangements to avoid mixing between classes and grades
- When possible, hold classes outdoors or in open, well-ventilated spaces

### Handle food carefully



- Limit food sharing
- Strengthen health screening for cafeteria staff and their close contacts
- Ensure cafeteria staff and their close contacts practice strict hygiene

### Stay home if...



- They are feeling sick
- They have a sick family member in their home

**What every American and community can do now to decrease the spread of the coronavirus**



## Keeping the workplace safe

### Encourage your employees to...

#### Practice good hygiene



- Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Clean hands at the door and schedule regular hand washing reminders by email
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching their faces and cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

#### Be careful with meetings and travel



- Use videoconferencing for meetings when possible
- When not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces
- Consider adjusting or postponing large meetings or gatherings
- Assess the risks of business travel

#### Handle food carefully



- Limit food sharing
- Strengthen health screening for cafeteria staff and their close contacts
- Ensure cafeteria staff and their close contacts practice strict hygiene

#### Stay home if...



- They are feeling sick
- They have a sick family member in their home

**What every American and community can do now to decrease the spread of the coronavirus**

## Keeping commercial establishments safe

### Encourage your employees and customers to...

#### Practice good hygiene



- Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Clean hands at the door, and schedule regular hand washing reminders by email
- Promote tap and pay to limit handling of cash
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

#### Avoid crowding



- Use booking and scheduling to stagger customer flow
- Use online transactions where possible
- Consider limiting attendance at larger gatherings

#### For transportation businesses, taxis, and ride shares



- Keep windows open when possible
- Increase ventilation
- Regularly disinfect surfaces

**What every American and community can do now to decrease the spread of the coronavirus**

# What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

## Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

## Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

**People:** As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

**Animals:** Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) for more information.

## Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

## Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

## Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

## Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

## Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

## Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

## Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). **Before** seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

## Discontinuing home isolation

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

