

March 5, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Southwestern Central School District is aware of concerns in the community about the issues related to the COVID-19 virus. The district is closely monitoring this fluid situation and following guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Chautauqua County Department of Health and the New York State Education Department.

If a student or staff member shows respiratory symptoms, we will follow our best practices for handling respiratory illnesses, subject to any additional guidance forthcoming. The district has infectious disease protocols in place and has been taking steps, such as cleaning and disinfecting throughout its schools, to minimize the spread of viruses and a variety of other illnesses.

There are a number of steps that students, staff and community members can take to minimize the spread of all respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, according to the state Department of Health:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Heavily soiled hands should be washed.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you or a family member begin showing symptoms of a respiratory disease and suspect it may be COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider and follow their advice.

Local health departments will contact schools if a suspected or known COVID-19 case emerges. The district is prepared to work with any affected families. Families are also encouraged to follow the CDC's information for travel, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>. For more information, consider consulting these additional resources:

- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>
- Travel: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/faqs.html>
- COVID-19: What is Stigma and What Causes It? <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/related-stigma.html>
- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - Frequently Asked Questions - Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#prevention>
- Prevention, Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

In addition, New York has established a Novel Coronavirus Hotline, which can provide additional information. Call 1-888-364-3065 with questions or concerns about travel and symptoms.

The district will continue to share information as it becomes available. Please know that, as always, the health and safety of our students and staff is our highest priority, and we will remain vigilant in our efforts to help prevent the spread of this illness.

Very truly yours,



Maureen Donahue
Superintendent of Schools

Tips for Preventing the Spread of Germs

Everyday Prevention Steps

- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth & nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Practice good health habits.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.
 - Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.



Encourage Everyday Preventative Actions to Stop the Spread of Germs

- Teach students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the bend of an arm.
- Teach that tissues are for single use only and must be discarded after use.
- Provide classrooms with adequate supplies, including tissues and lined trash cans.
- Teach students to refrain from touching their faces, particularly their eyes, nose and mouth.

When to Wash Hands

- Teach students when to wash their hands:
 - Before, during and after preparing food
 - Before eating food
 - After using the restroom
 - Before and after caring for someone who is ill
 - Before and after attending to someone who is bleeding and/or covering a wound
 - After changing diapers or assisting a child using the restroom
 - After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
 - After handling a pet/animal or animal food, treats, or waste
 - After handling garbage
- Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on your hands.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% alcohol. Note: Hand sanitizers only reduce the number of germs on hands, they do not eliminate all types of germs.
- If hands are visibly dirty or greasy, wash them with soap and water.

