

SJSD families,

As the novel coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) evolves, we understand that our staff members and families have concerns about the potential impact in our school community. The St. Joseph School District continues to monitor the situation for the latest information and coordinate response plans. We are communicating regularly with local and [state partners](#) as well as following [guidance from the CDC](#). It is important to note that there are no confirmed cases in Buchanan County at this time.

When a new disease is circulating, it's natural for people to ask what they can do to protect themselves and their families. The best guidance is to take the same precautions recommended during flu season which include, but are not limited to:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available;
- Cover nose and mouth with a sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth to prevent the spread of germs;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick;
- Stay home from school and work when you are sick.

We also want to reassure you that we have plans in place to help prevent and respond to an outbreak of illness.

- For more than 10 years, the St. Joseph School District has had a pandemic crisis action plan in place which is reviewed and updated regularly.
- The SJSD maintenance department has scheduled a deep disinfection of schools for next week while the buildings are empty during spring break, in addition to regular cleaning procedures.
- Apple Bus Company has a targeted plan for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting buses used to transport St. Joseph School District students. (See attachment)
- We have added additional sanitizing dispensers in our schools.
- The District Leadership Team has a plan prepared to provide instructional resources in the event of an extended absence.
 - **As a proactive measure only, instructional materials and district-issued technology will be sent home with students at the end of the day on Thursday, March 12 for use ONLY IN THE EVENT OF AN EXTENDED ABSENCE. Please note -- this IS NOT Spring Break homework. These resources were prepared as a proactive measure only.**

The St. Joseph School District is also fortunate to have experienced health experts on staff including registered nurses in every school. Please be assured that we will continue to keep an eye on illness in our schools, as is our standard practice to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

As always, we will share additional information with you as needed. If you have any questions about the health and wellness of your students or staff, please contact our Health Services Department at 816-671-4000.

Thank you for your help as we keep our students healthy! We wish you a happy and restful Spring Break.

Dr. Doug Van Zyl
SJSD Superintendent