

SOUTHEAST LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Parents and Guardians,

There has been a great deal of coverage in the media about the coronavirus lately. We are writing to share the district's efforts to ensure the health and safety of all students in our buildings.

I want to assure you that the Southeast Local School district is keeping track of this situation through proven and trustworthy sources: our local health department, the Ohio Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). **These health officials believe the risk to our school community is low at this time.**

Should a situation arise, we are prepared to implement public health recommendations and guidance as required. Updated information will be shared with the community and posted on our website as it would become available.

As a best practice for overall health in cold and influenza season, Southeast and the health officials are recommending that everyone engages in everyday, preventive measures to prevent the spread of germs and avoid illness, such as:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
- **Stay home when you are sick.**
- Cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Take any anti-viral medication prescribed to you as instructed.

While a new type of illness can be scary, we can protect our students, staff and the broader community by using simple everyday actions that protect people from other types of respiratory viruses. Our staff members are working carefully to encourage these simple and effective habits of frequent handwashing, covering every cough or sneeze, and cleaning classroom tables/surfaces frequently. This is important not just to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, but to help prohibit other infections that can lead to student illness and absences.

Updated information from the CDC on coronavirus in the United States can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

These include

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- 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.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

