

Dear Yoncalla School District Family,

A respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus (COVID 19) first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, has caused outbreaks in many countries around the world. The number of cases across the United States is still small. We want to reassure you that our school district is keeping track of this situation through proven and reliable sources: Douglas Public Health Network, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO). **These health officials believe the risk to our school community is low at this time.**

Updated information from the CDC on coronavirus in the United States can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> and/or WHO at: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>

The most recent information about coronavirus in Oregon may be found at: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASES/CONDITIONS/DISEASESAZ/Pages/emerging-respiratory-infections.aspx>.

We are continuing to learn about COVID 19. Based on the up-to-date information, health authorities are recommending communities and schools should take the same steps to protect against COVID 19 as we take to block the spread of common sicknesses like colds or the flu:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and/or **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.

The COVID 19 is believed to be spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, much in the way the flu and other respiratory viruses are spread. Symptoms can be fever, cough, or respiratory distress. At this time, persons considered at risk are those who have travel to China, or those in close contact with persons infected with COVID 19.

While the lack of knowledge regarding COVID 19 can be scary, we can protect our students, teachers, and community by using simple normal actions that protect people from other types of respiratory viruses. Our teachers, district nurses, and staff 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 COVID 19, but to help prevent the spread of other infections that can lead to student illness and absences.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Brian Berry, Superintendent  
Yoncalla School District