United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION
Washington, D.C. 20240

March 4, 2020

Dear Parents and School Leaders,

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) is actively involved in supporting the U.S. response to COVID-19, or Novel Coronavirus, and continues to collaborate with Federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC).

CDC considers this to be a very serious public health threat; however, based on current information, the immediate health risk within the U.S. is considered low at this time. Medical and public health experts across the Federal government are working to understand the virus, identify routes of exposure, and limit its spread in coordination with international partners.

There is no higher priority than protecting the safety of our students, employees and communities. We want to ensure all are aware of the tried and true hygiene practices that can be very effective in reducing the chance of getting sick. Public health officials across the nation recommend these basic prevention guidelines:

- 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;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or utilize your elbow when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the tissue and wash your hands again;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces; and
- Most importantly, if your child has symptoms of the flu or of any serious infection or virus, please utilize your best judgement to determine if your child should stay home or consult a physician to avoid exposing others.
- Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure and may include: fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

I ask for your help in reinforcing the recommended practices listed above with your children. In situations like this, it is best to rely on factual information from reliable sources. For the most current information, please refer to the CDC website for general information: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html.

For school specific information from the CDC, please utilize the following webpages:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html

Once again, we are monitoring this situation closely and will provide updates to our community should further steps become necessary. For inquiries or concerns, please contact the Bureau of Indian Education at crisisalert@bie.edu. As always, thank you for working with us to keep our schools healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tamarah Pfeiffer
Acting Chief Academic Officer