

March 5, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) is working closely with your child's school district, local health providers, and state organizations to keep our communities safe from the novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. We continue to monitor the situation and are prepared to respond if someone is sick with COVID-19, or has been exposed.

The virus causing COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that causes respiratory illness ranging from mild and cold-like to more severe illnesses, like pneumonia. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believe COVID-19 is spread through droplets produced when someone coughs or sneezes. Most people diagnosed with COVID-19 have mild disease. Reports of children with severe disease are uncommon. Currently, there are no vaccines or specific treatments for COVID-19.

To help stop the spread of COVID-19, SCPHD recommends the following:

- Keep children home when they are sick. Teach your children to always cover their cough with a tissue or their elbow and to throw the tissue away immediately.
- Remind children to frequently wash their hands with soap and water (or hand sanitizer).
- Remind children to avoid touching their mouth, eyes, and nose and clean/sanitize frequently touched surfaces and objects.

This virus does not discriminate among ethnicities or countries of origin. Avoiding people from another country **will not** protect you or your family and is discouraged.

To effectively plan for when community spread of COVID-19 occurs, parents/guardians should do the following:

- Designate a guardian to care for you children if schools close and you cannot stay home.
- Know your child's school plan to communicate with you when needed, such as robocalls, emails, or checking a website.
- Be prepared for sudden school closures and for these closures to last an extended period of time.

If a case of COVID-19 is connected with a local school, SCPHD may recommend school closures to minimize spread through students and staff, depending on severity of the case and how many people may have come into contact with the virus. For any other questions about COVID-19, please visit our website: <https://www.phd5.idaho.gov/CoronaVirus/>

Sincerely,



Melody Bowyer
South Central Public Health District Director