



February 28, 2020

Dear Gwinnett County Public Schools families,

Given recent news reports about cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading in other countries, we wanted to provide our families with an update. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, "For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low."

While health officials say that the risk currently is very low to Americans, they acknowledge that the situation could change and they fully expect we will see more cases here in the United States. As of today, Friday, February 28, 2020, there are no known cases of COVID-19 in Georgia. However, knowing that this could change and because our students' health and safety are a priority we all share, we want to share some basic information with you about this virus and steps our school district is taking to prepare.

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**The Mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools**  
*is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.*

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### What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that is primarily spread person-to-person through close contact with individuals who are ill with COVID-19. Like other respiratory viruses, it could also be spread by a person touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching his or her mouth, nose, or, possibly, eyes.

The symptoms of COVID-19 in people are often similar to those of regular seasonal flu, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Although the majority of cases involve mild illness, patients with COVID-19 can become severely ill.

### GCPS preparation and response:

In addition to receiving guidance from the Georgia Department of Public Health and the CDC, Gwinnett County Public Schools has a close relationship with the Gwinnett County Health Department. If cases of COVID-19 are confirmed locally, we will be notified and provided guidance to limit the spread of illness. Additionally, GCPS has a team of leaders that is reviewing and updating the district's response plans appropriately, based on what is currently known about this virus and the direction we are receiving from health officials.

### What you can do to keep your family healthy:

That said, when it comes to keeping students healthy, perhaps the most important relationship is the one we have with you. We need your help to prevent the spread of illness in our schools— not just COVID-19, but any kind of illness.

Below are everyday actions you and your family can take to stay healthy.

- **Sneeze and cough into your elbow or cover with a tissue.** In other words, keep germs off your hands. Put used tissues in a wastebasket and then wash your hands.
- **Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs spread that way.
- **Don't share personal items**, including toothbrushes, towels, cups/glasses, utensils, etc.
- **Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are frequently touched**, using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe following the instructions on the label.
- **Try to avoid close contact with sick people.**
- **If your children get sick, please keep them home from school** and limit contact with others. If your child is ill and has recently traveled to an area affected by COVID-19, or has been around someone who has been infected with COVID-19, contact your child's healthcare provider immediately.

If you would like more information about the COVID-19 virus, visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).