

Panhandle ISD Coronavirus (COVID-19) Statement

An outbreak of respiratory illness caused by the new coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, has caused an outbreak of respiratory illness and the United States has confirmed a handful of coronavirus cases related to travel. I want to assure you that our school district is keeping track of this situation through proven and trustworthy sources: our local health department, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These health officials believe the risk to our school community is low at this time.

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

The most recent information about coronavirus in Texas may be found at: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>.

Much is being learned about this newly emerged virus. Based on the current information, health officials are recommending local communities and schools should take the same steps to protect against coronavirus as we take to prevent the spread of everyday illnesses like the common cold 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.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people 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.

The coronavirus 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 difficulty breathing. At this time, persons considered at risk are those with travel to China, or those in close contact with persons infected with coronavirus.

While a new type of illness can be scary, we can protect our students, teachers, and the PISD community by using simple everyday actions that protect people from other types of respiratory viruses. Our 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 coronavirus, but to help prevent the spread of other infections that can lead to student illness and absences. Thank you for your continued support of the PISD.

Blair Brown, Superintendent

PISD LEVEL 1: ALERT STATUS

(No reported cases in the area)

- Monitor attendance and communicate with Carson County OEM
- Communicate to parents to keep sick kids home
- Communicate to staff to stay home if sick
- Review Safety Procedures; begin Administrative Team meetings for updates
- Review Emergency and Safety Procedures to include reunification of students with parents.
- Frequently clean and disinfect student classrooms.
- Frequently clean and disinfect other areas of district

PISD LEVEL 2: ALERT AND PRECAUTIONS

(Cases in the region; but not local)

- Continue to monitor attendance and communicate with Carson County OEM
- Communicate to parents to keep sick kids home
- Communicate to staff to stay home if sick
- Develop contingency plan
- Potentially limit unnecessary student and staff travel
- Potentially limit district/campus events
- Potentially limit outside visitors/guests
- Potentially limit outside food deliveries
- Thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all facilities, buses, etc.

PISD LEVEL 3: RESPONSE AND MITIGATION

(Reported local cases)

- Consider closing district/campuses
- Communicate with Carson County OEM the extent of closures, length, and accommodations
- Communicate with parents the extent of closures, length, and accommodations
- Communicate with the Texas Education Agency the extent of closures, length, and accommodations
- Cancel all school events
- Cancel all travel
- Thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all facilities, buses, etc.

Reminders:

1. Avoid close contact with sick people.
2. Stay home when sick.
3. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
4. Wash hands often and use hand sanitizer.
5. Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Practice good health habits: get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of water and eat nutritious meals.
7. Contact your family physician if you have flu or coronavirus-like symptoms.