

Dear District 161 Families,

The health, safety, and well-being of our school community continues to be the highest priority in Summit Hill SD 161, therefore the District has developed a Pandemic Preparedness Plan to protect our students, staff and families while doing our part in helping to reduce the spread of the virus. The plan includes the following measures:

Minimize the Spread of the COVID-19 Virus

- **Monitor State and Federal Health Agencies:**

District Administration will continue to collaborate with the [Will County Health Department](#), as well as follow the guidance established by the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), the [Illinois State Board of Education](#), and the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#).

- **Protocol for screening ill students:**

Building Administration will continue to monitor absenteeism patterns for students. When calling in an absence, please include detailed information about why your student will be absent. Please include health symptoms. If symptoms include respiratory symptoms including fever, cough and difficulty breathing, the school nurse will call you back to conduct a further assessment of your child's symptoms. If you are choosing to self-quarantine your child or if you have been directed by the IDPH to quarantine due to the COVID-19 virus, please contact the school and report this information. The nurse will follow all guidance from the IDPH when inquiring about your child's health.

- **Students who present to be ill while at school:**

Students who arrive to school ill, or become ill at school, will be sent home as soon as possible. Sick students will be separated from well students as much as possible. Students must be fever-free without anti-fever medication for a full 24-hour period before returning to school. The District will follow the IDPH guidelines regarding the timely communication to families in the event a confirmed case of COVID-19 was present in our District.

- **Avoidance of stigma related to COVID-19:**

The District will combat stigma related to confirmed cases of COVID-19. As new information emerges, we need to be reminded that the risk of COVID-19 is not at all connected to race, ethnicity, or nationality. Stigma will not help to fight the illness. We are committed to sharing accurate information to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading, while maintaining the confidentiality of our students and staff.

- **Student attendance after travel:**

According to the IDPH, students who have traveled to an affected geographic location with a travel warning of level three, will not be allowed to attend school for 14 days after the return date.

- **Hand hygiene:**
Staff are promoting a greater emphasis on hand washing throughout the day. We have an abundant supply of hand soap in restrooms and at classroom sinks. Staff will be incorporating scheduled hand-washing breaks for students into their daily schedule.
- **Facility cleaning:**
Alpha Cleaning Service, which provides our custodial services, continues to follow the recommended processes for cleaning and disinfecting with products registered with the Environmental Protection Agency. Our custodians have increased the cleaning of surfaces throughout the day. We have been informed that LW-210 Transportation is doing daily cleaning of buses.
- **Postpone or cancellation of large public gatherings:**
Event cancellation will be communicated to families as soon as decisions are made.

Continuity of Learning

While we hope that closing schools is not necessary, we are currently preparing to continue providing learning opportunities for all students if we do close schools. Even though we all understand that the best learning environment for elementary students is provided in person, by a well prepared teacher and support staff, we want to make sure we provide some level of learning opportunities if we have no choice but to close schools.

- The District will follow ISBE guidelines that are updated frequently. On March 14, received information from ISBE: Due to current health landscape, school districts will not be required to use or make up emergency days related to COVID-19. Any days missed due to COVID-19 shall be considered Act of God days and are not required to be made up.
- If the District is closed for an extended period, educational opportunities will be posted on the District website and homepage for each school.

Our goal is to keep schools open, however given this pandemic situation, we may be directed by State health officials to close our doors for an undetermined amount of time. I encourage all parents to have contingency plans in the event school must be closed. Our preference is to give families a few days to plan, but since this situation is changing quickly, advance notice may not be possible. I also encourage parents to continue making decisions that you feel are in the best interest of your family. If you feel that sending your child(ren) to school is not in the best interest of your child(ren) during this time, please inform the school of your decision.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Barb Rains, Ed. D.
Superintendent