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*Please read this important message from Gilbert Community Schools*

We understand that the Novel Coronavirus, now known as COVID-19, is causing much anxiety in our community, state, and world. Gilbert Community Schools is working with the CDC, IA Dept. of Public Health (IDPH), and Story County Public Health to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.

### **What is Known**

- The virus causing COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified and causes a respiratory illness ranging from a mild cold-like illness to severe respiratory disease.
- Similar to influenza, the people who are most likely to have severe disease and complications from COVID-19 are believed to be the very old, very young and those with other chronic or underlying medical conditions.
- There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19, so prevention is very important.
- As of March 3, 2020, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Iowa. However, experts predict there will eventually be community spread. IDPH, Story County Public Health, and Gilbert CSD are preparing for when/if this happens.

### **How the Virus Spreads**

- COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads—through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are the most symptomatic (the sickest).

### **What You Can Do Now**

- Students who are ill, especially with acute respiratory symptoms (not allergies or chronic conditions), should stay home.
  - A reminder of our Gilbert CSD practice
    - Your child should only attend school if he/she has been fever-free without the help of medication for 24 hours and has not vomited or had diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
    - Ensure you have a plan to designate a caregiver, such as a family member or neighbor, for a sick child(ren) if you cannot stay home.
- Always cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Wash hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer) after touching face, using the restroom, or before eating.
- Avoid touching your mouth and nose.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (everyday household disinfectants are fine).
  - Enhance the cleaning of high touch surfaces like doorknobs, toilet handles, and sink handles.
  - Gilbert CSD is enhancing our cleaning of high touch surface areas.

Find up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Iowa at this <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus>