

Phillip Thompson, Ed.D.
Superintendent



Haywood Hand, M.Ed.
Assistant Superintendent

March 9, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

At Rockbridge County Public Schools, the health, safety and well-being of our students and staff are always our top priorities. With the recently elevated discussion regarding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the news, we want to take a moment to reinforce preventive safety measures and to let you know that our school division is working closely with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to monitor the current status of the Coronavirus in Virginia.

As of this writing, there have been only three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Virginia, and these three cases have been residents of the northern Virginia area close to Washington, D.C. However, the flu season is still in process and because preventing the spread of illnesses is all of our responsibility, we encourage our students, staff and families to be mindful of key preventive measures, including:

- Wash your hands regularly, especially after using the restroom and before preparing or consuming food. Using soap and hot water, wash for about 20 seconds. Be sure to also wash your fingertips.
- Avoid contact with anyone who is sick.
- Avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands or in the air. Always try to cough or sneeze into a tissue, and then throw the tissue away. If you don't have a tissue, cough/sneeze into your arm.
- As much as you can, avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

There is also helpful information on the VDH website that can be useful in avoiding the spread of this and other illnesses found at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>. More information is also available on the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

In addition, please remember that if children are sick, they should not be at school. Students need to be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to class after any illness. Keeping children home when they are sick is critical to prevention.

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As administrators review different possible courses of action, please know that should one confirmed case be identified in our community, and if there is any confirmed connection to one or more of our schools, one or more schools are likely to be closed for a minimum of 14 days, upon recommendation by the VDH. RCPS is already preparing in the event that one or more schools would need to be closed in the event of an outbreak. We are looking at options that might include continued educational opportunities for students while they are at home. We strongly encourage families to also consider creating family plans that include childcare needs in the event that schools close for an extended period of time.

We will continue to monitor the situation in collaboration with the VDH and keep you up to date. We appreciate the support and assistance of our community as we work together for the well-being of our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Phillip Thompson'.

Phillip Thompson
Division Superintendent