

February 26, 2020

Dear Tomball ISD Community,

In an effort to be proactive and communicate transparently, Tomball ISD is reaching out to you regarding the coronavirus—or COVID-19—outbreak. We want to share elements of our District's Pandemic Emergency Response Plan that include preventative measures we are taking to protect our students and contingency plans the District could take in the event of a localized outbreak. Lastly, we want to share travel advisory information with families as you potentially prepare for Spring Break travels in a few weeks.

Tomball ISD has been monitoring the development of the coronavirus outbreak and recently sent out a letter on February 7, 2020, from the Harris County Public Health Department regarding coronavirus' impact in the county. On February 25, 2020, Dr. Nancy Messonnier, the Director of the Center for the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), warned that the coronavirus has potential to spread to the United States and that citizens should be prepared for disruption of normal operations, including school closures.

While there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Harris County, the District has been following its established Pandemic Emergency Response Plan that has been in place since 2007. Our plan includes preventative measures such as education about handwashing and spreading germs; placement of mounted hand sanitizer dispensers in key areas like the cafeteria, building entrances and restrooms; and deep cleaning protocols for campuses with higher than average absentee rates. Our plan also includes processes for District administration to review absentee rates for students and teachers to determine if school closures or alternatives need to be taken to protect student and staff safety and health.

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. State medical experts indicate that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same recommendations for preventing the spread of the flu:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
  - Facemasks should be used for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings.

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- Wash your hands often 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 that contains at least 60% alcohol, if soap and water are not available.

Also, as we prepare for some much deserved rest and relaxation for Spring Break, please pay particular attention to the established travel advisories and carefully consider the necessity of out-of-country travel. As a resource to our Tomball ISD community, we have created a webpage on our District website that has information, articles, and links to important information regarding COVID-19 coronavirus. Please visit our Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) tab on the TISD Health Services Department Page for continuous updates.

As always, we thank you for the trust and confidence you place in us every single day to keep your children safe. I know working together we will continue to provide a safe, secure and healthy learning environment for all students in Tomball ISD.

Sincerely,

Martha Salazar-Zamora  
Superintendent of Schools