



February 28, 2020

Dear Isle of Wight County Schools families,

A new coronavirus (COVID-19) first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China has caused an outbreak of respiratory illness. Cases are also being reported in a growing number of countries internationally, including the United States, where the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed on January 21, 2020, in a traveler who had recently returned from Wuhan. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States and health officials believe the immediate health risk from COVID-19 in the US is low.

I want to assure you that IWCS is monitoring this situation through proven and trustworthy sources including the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These agencies are encouraging communities to take the same steps to protect against COVID-19 that are recommended to prevent the spread of everyday illnesses like the common cold or flu:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available.
- Cover nose and mouth with a sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth to prevent the spread of germs.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.

We are putting measures in place to ensure a healthy learning environment for our students. Our school nurses and staff will be working with students to promote good hygiene and to keep everyone healthy and safe. We will also work with our custodial providers to ensure our schools receive a thorough cleaning every day. I ask for your help in reinforcing the recommended practices listed above at home with your children. We are also updating our Pandemic Response Plan to address additional responses and actions IWCS will implement in response to the coronavirus situation and future widespread health events. You can visit our website for more information: <https://www.iwcs.k12.va.us/apps/pages/coronavirus.387>

Once again, we will continue to monitor this situation, coordinate with our health partners, and provide updates to our community should further steps become necessary. As always, thank you for working with us to keep our schools healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Jim Thornton, Ed.D.  
Superintendent