



March 1, 2020

Dear Central Valley School District Families:

The health of our children is important to all of us. While there are no reports of COVID-19 (a type of coronavirus) in our schools, over the coming months we may see potential cases of COVID-19 in addition to seasonal flu among students and staff in Central Valley schools. Currently, the risk to the general public of COVID-19 is low. However, I would like to take this opportunity to update you about preparations and anticipated response to these illnesses in our schools.

### **Education and Prevention**

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that includes a fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Influenza (the flu) is a highly contagious viral infection that affects the lungs and sinuses. We are actively reminding our staff and students to use simple hygiene techniques to prevent the spread of viruses, including:

- **Wash your hands often** – with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds preferably, or if not available, then use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** – cough or sneeze into your sleeve/elbow, not into your hands. You may also use a tissue when you sneeze, cough, or blow your nose. Quickly throw away used tissues then wash your hands.
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick**– most germs spread when a sick person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- **Do not share** - food, utensils, beverages, towels, chapstick/lipstick, toys, or anything else that might become contaminated with germs.
- **Stay at home while you are sick** - if you have a cold, fever, cough, respiratory and/or flu-like symptoms.

Flu-like symptoms include fever (100°F or higher), cough, sneezing, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, or extreme exhaustion.

### **Communications and Planning**

The district is working closely with local public health officials to prepare for and track cases of COVID-19 in our schools. We are reviewing and updating our district's pandemic influenza plan to adapt for COVID-19.

### **Illness Response and Tracking**

Our school employees are now on alert for students with flu-like symptoms and are acting quickly to send ill students home. While they are waiting to be picked up, students with flu-like symptoms will be separated from other students and may be asked to wear a mask to prevent the spread of illness to others.

Parents who pick up a child with flu-like symptoms at school will receive instructions from the school with the recommendation to keep sick children at home until their symptoms are gone and until they have been free of fever (less than 100°F, without the use of fever-reducing medicine) for at least 72\* hours.

\*(Updated 3/9/20 based on Spokane Regional Health District recommendation.)

Our schools are tracking student and staff illness and will report high levels of absenteeism to the Spokane Regional Health District.

Our custodians are remaining vigilant about cleaning surfaces where germs reside. This includes frequently disinfecting desks, keyboards, door handles, faucets, countertops, and other surfaces. This increased cleaning applies to high touch areas on our busses as well.

**What You Can Do**

As a parent, there is much that you can do to help prevent the spread of viruses, including COVID-19 and influenza in our schools. Most importantly, please keep your sick child at home until completely well. When you report your student's absence to your school, please provide details about your child's specific symptoms. Continue to reinforce proper hand washing and hygiene techniques with your children throughout the year.

Parents are also encouraged to plan for childcare at home if your child gets sick or their school is closed. In addition, if you have children with other medical conditions that put them at higher risk for the flu, talk to your healthcare provider now about additional planning specific to your child.

Your patience is appreciated as we work to follow public health guidelines by sending sick children home and asking questions about your child's specific symptoms to better track cases of viruses and influenza in our community. Visit our district website at [www.CVSD.org](http://www.CVSD.org) where we will post timely informational updates.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we work together, to keep our students healthy.

Sincerely,



Ben C. Small  
Superintendent