

Dear Parkland Parents/Guardians,

The coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to be an evolving situation across the world and our country and concern continues to grow locally as an increased number of confirmed cases are being reported in Pennsylvania every day. The health and safety of our students and staff is our priority.

The Parkland School District is actively monitoring the PA Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control for situational updates and we are in regular contact with the Parkland School District Physician at St. Luke's University Health Network. The guidance provided here is based upon current knowledge of COVID-19. We will be working in close collaboration and coordination with local health officials to make school cancellation decisions. The District is actively preparing to make procedural adjustments as recommended by those agencies. It is important to note that the District has a response plan for pandemic outbreaks, which contains guidelines on monitoring attendance and illness for staff and students, as well as a plan of care for anyone who becomes ill. At this time, out of an abundance of caution for our school nurses, if a child becomes sick at school and a fever is confirmed or respiratory illness is suspected, the child will be asked to wear a disposable face mask and be sent home. In these instances, parents will be instructed to contact their healthcare provider for further instructions. Triage procedures are in place to separate sick and well students.

School nurse offices and classrooms continue to be cleaned daily with the use of disinfecting machines in buildings where students are experiencing high levels of the common flu. Tracking attendance has allowed us to focus extra attention on classrooms of high absenteeism so that these areas can be disinfected at night. Each evening, our cleaning staff is extra vigilant about disinfecting desks, doorknobs, school bus seats, phones and all public areas.

Even with these precautionary measures in place, we realize that a school or district closure might become necessary. Parkland employs close to 1,500 staff, many of whom could become affected by the virus and force us to close because we would not be able to deliver services without a critical number of staff. Additionally, the Department of Health could ask us to close due to concerns of a spread in nearby regions, leaving us without a choice.

Our leadership team has reviewed various situations in enacting preparedness plans should COVID-19 affect Lehigh County. While we believe the continuation of learning is very important, we have reached the conclusion that, in the event of a shut-down, no assignments will be graded nor will they be mandatory. However, recommendations for extended learning opportunities will be shared. The recommendations are not meant to replace instructional time and will not be counted as days of school, but they will be designed to keep students in learning mode while at home.

We realize that a school closure brings various challenges, so we have compiled a list of questions and answers that are designed to help you prepare you and your student(s).

How can we extend learning if school is closed?

Our goal will be for students to take advantage of many technology resources that are available in the student Clever portal. [Clever](#) is the home for all instructional applications and resources; students use their network login and password to access this "one stop shopping" portal for all academic resources (many applications in Clever feature instant login). The direct address to the Clever portal is <https://clever.com/in/parklandsd/staff/portal>. It can also be accessed by clicking the Clever link located in the top of the school district website.

We will ask teachers to provide activities, if they are able, in the event of a prolonged absence, via Schoology, Parkland's online learning management system, or via other communication tools that your child's teacher has used this year. This will not take the place of regular classroom instruction

but will supplement student learning. Assignments will not be required or graded but are intended to reinforce or extend learning while at home. Parents can help by encouraging their child's participation in independent learning while at home for an extended time period.

What if my student doesn't have a computing device or internet connection?

Chromebook devices are issued to students in grades 5-12 and should already be coming home daily. In grades 2-4, if your child does not have a learning device at home or you would like to borrow a mobile hot spot, please complete [this form](#). In grades K-1, with our focus on literacy, we are encouraging students to read and be read to as much as possible. Family literacy resources can be found at <http://www.lehighvalleyreads.org> and <https://readcharlotte.org/for-families/>. We do not plan to send student iPads home at this time.

What about families who need childcare in the event of a shut-down?

We ask that all families start to make contingency plans for childcare in the event of an unprecedented shut-down of school.

My family is anxious about the coronavirus. Is there a good way to discuss this that helps ease anxiety?

BrainPop, one of Parkland's educational technology resources, developed [this video](#) that provides a great way of sharing information about the virus with children in a calm, factual manner. It's a great resource for adults too.

Is there a central location where I can view resources about coronavirus?

We are keeping Parkland's [coronavirus webpage](#) updated with resources and links to important information including the [CDC guidance and resources for households](#). As it states, the best advice for prevention of any respiratory virus continues to be simple, common sense preventative actions that apply to everyone:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with your elbow or a tissue that is immediately placed in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, remotes, and other frequently touched items.
- If your child is sick and running a fever, defined as a temperature greater than or equal to 100-degree Fahrenheit, please keep them out of school until they are fever free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medications.

We will continue to update you as new information becomes available. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Richard T. Sniscak, Superintendent of Schools