



Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Dear Friendship Academy Family,

Health officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) are monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness, called coronavirus disease 2019 (now named: COVID-19), caused by a new coronavirus that was first detected in China. We want to assure you that our school is keeping track of this situation through these proven and trustworthy sources as well as the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). **These health officials believe the risk to our school community is low at this time.** As of March 4, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Minnesota.

This new virus is believed to be spread through the air when a person coughs or sneezes, much in the way the flu and other respiratory viruses are spread. It also may be possible to spread COVID-19 by touching surfaces or objects that have the virus on them and then touching your nose, mouth, or eyes. Symptoms may include fever, cough, and shortness of breath/difficulty breathing.

Based on the current information, the most important things that you can do to protect yourself and your family from contagious conditions are the same practices that we promote every year during cold and flu season:

- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Stay home when you are sick.**
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Our teachers and staff are working carefully to encourage these effective habits and are in the prevention stage of managing for a potential outbreak. Rest assured that you would receive communication from us via the same methods of communication used for weather emergencies--phone, social media, and email. We will follow recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health; you may find more information about how to prepare your home and family from this [NPR report](#), while the CDC maintains updated information on [their website](#).

Thank you for your support of our school, our students, our teachers, and staff. We will continue to provide information as we monitor the situation.

Respectfully,
Friendship Academy Administration

Cleaning and Personal Hygiene Tips for School Staff

2600 East 38th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55406 P: (612) 879-6703 F: (612) 879-6707

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Studies show that regular soap works just as well as antibacterial soap for hand washing.
 - Encourage hand washing after using the restroom, before eating, after blowing your nose, before touching your face, and if hands are visibly soiled.
 - Use this helpful video from WHO that shows proper handwashing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PmVJQUCm4E>
 - Use this handy visual hand washing instructional poster from MDH: <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Aascds%3AUS%3A8e35f276-a8f7-4ae3-8dc0-a451ee0c5eff>
- **Stay home when you are sick!**
 - Stay home until you are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.
 - Stay home until at least 24 hours past the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea without the use of medications.
 - Stay home if you have a persistent/continuous cough that makes it hard to work or learn or that is disruptive to others around you.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - If students or staff become ill when at school, separate them from students and staff who are not sick until they go home.
 - Enforce the prompt pick up of any sick student.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze. Alternatively, cough or sneeze into a tissue and immediately throw the tissue away and then wash your hands. Discourage coughing or sneezing into your hand/s as this will spread germs to surfaces and other people who are then touched.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
 - Use a bleach solution or a designated disinfectant solution or wet wipe product.
 - Read the label to be sure the disinfecting product being used is rated for different kinds of germs, including coronaviruses.
 - Follow directions on disinfecting products in regards to how long to keep the surface wet with the solution.
 - Have containers of disinfecting wipes throughout the school and in classrooms to encourage frequent cleaning.
 - Wash your hands after cleaning and disinfecting surfaces or objects.