



# ROCK PORT R-II SCHOOL DISTRICT

"To Be a Source of Inspiration and Knowledge for All"

**600 South Nebraska Street    Rock Port, Missouri 64482    Fax (660) 744-5539    Web Page [rockport.k12.mo.us](http://rockport.k12.mo.us)**

<b>Mr. Ethan Sickels</b> Superintendent (660) 744-6298	<b>Mr. Donnie Parsons</b> High School Principal (660) 744-6296	<b>Mr. Steve Waigand</b> Elementary Principal (660) 744-6294
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March 11, 2020

Dear Rock Port R-II Parents:

We continue to monitor the latest information on the Coronavirus (COVID-19). We want all families to be prepared should the virus be detected in our own community. We are staying in close contact with state and local health officials. Please understand our school district leadership is considering all possible scenarios to protect the well-being of our students and staff as we monitor COVID-19.

Two useful links are:

<https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus/>

<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/>

The Missouri Coronavirus Information Hotline has also been set up to receive calls:

**Hotline Number: 1-877-435-8411**

## **Brief summary**

COVID-19 is a new respiratory illness from the coronavirus family. COVID-19 is spread person to person, generally between people who have close prolonged, contact with one another (within 6 feet). Symptoms include fever (100.4 or higher), cough, and shortness of breath.

## **Prevention**

As with other respiratory viruses, there are simple steps which can help stop the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often, for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue, dispose of the tissue and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces with regular household cleaners
- The general public does not need to wear a facemask. Those who are ill and around others should wear a facemask.
- There are no medications to treat COVID-19 and there is not a vaccine.
- **If you become ill, stay home and call your provider.**
  - Increase your space away from others and monitor your symptoms.

## Response

Our school district's custodians are exceptional, and already utilize strong practices for preventing the spread of viruses. Strategies which have proven useful during past virus outbreaks (SARS, H1N1) remain in-place, and include the frequent disinfection of surfaces such as desktops, tabletops, doorknobs, light switches, locker handles, faucet handles, etc. These practices have been successful in minimizing the spread of influenza and other viruses, and an aggressive approach to surface disinfection will continue.

Further, beyond the quality academic instruction which they deliver, our faculty and staff also work with students on matters of personal and community hygiene. Students should expect frequent reminders about washing their hands, respectfully coughing/sneezing, etc.

Ultimately, nobody knows how extensive this outbreak will be, or if/how our region will be affected. In general, virus responses are directed by the Missouri Department of Health and the Atchison County Health Department, but we may also receive direction from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary, the CDC, the Governor, or other levels of higher office. We will continue to monitor this matter closely, and will react as appropriate.

### **Please consider the following information to help you and your family be prepared:**

At this point (3/11/2020), there has not been a confirmed case in our county. However, in monitoring the spread of this virus throughout the United States and the rest of the world, it is very clear things can change suddenly.

- In the event that Rock Port R-II schools are required to close, I encourage all parents to develop plans now for your children. Unlike winter weather-related closures, school districts in other states that have closed for COVID-19 have shut down for one or two weeks. We understand this would create a hardship for many of our families, especially if we are required to close with very little advanced notice.
- We will continue to share updated information with you through Textcaster and Twitter, and will send home updates by letter when applicable.

We will continue to stay in close contact with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as they are issuing guidance to Missouri's school districts. We want our families to be prepared for all possible scenarios, including an extended closure of schools, should COVID-19 become an issue locally. All decisions will be made in the best interest of the health of our students, staff and community.

For now, our best advice is to practice responsible prevention to the spread of this virus, to keep students who are ill home from school, and to consult your primary medical caregiver if any of the symptoms associated with the COVID-19 virus present. Together, we will successfully navigate this matter, as we have done with pandemics of years past. More information will be shared with parents as this situation evolves, and we look forward to your partnership as we all manage this fluid situation.

Sincerely,



Ethan Sickels