

# **Odessa-Montour Central School District**

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## **Superintendent's Office**

Christopher J. Wood, Superintendent of Schools



March 10, 2020

Dear Odessa-Montour parents and guardians,

The 2019 Novel (New) Coronavirus, which causes the disease known as COVID-19, has been a major topic in the national news. There are thousands of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a growing number of countries internationally. The virus is now spreading in the United States and there are confirmed cases in New York State. I am writing to share information with you about what we know and what we are doing to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.

We are in constant contact with New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and Schuyler County Public Health and are receiving updated guidance from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) regularly. This week, the NYS DOH and NYSED issued a joint updated guidance for schools that we are using in our prevention and planning steps.

We encourage you to follow the procedures below at home:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick. Keep children home until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. If you use a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include coughing, fever and trouble breathing. Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, but some individuals may develop symptoms that are more severe. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes at this time that symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus. If your child is displaying symptoms, Schuyler County Public Health has advised that parents should call their physician's office before going to the office. The CDC does *not* recommend that people who are healthy wear masks to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. Unless advised otherwise by a healthcare professional, it is not necessary to send your child to school wearing a protective mask.

If a student or staff member in our district is tested and confirmed as a COVID-19 case, NYSDOH will require an initial 24-hour closure to allow time for cleaning and disinfection, for NYSDOH and Schuyler County Public Health to begin an investigation into the contacts that the individual may have had, and to determine next steps. We anticipate that the school would only be closed for 24 hours for an initial confirmation and not longer, unless additional confirmed cases arise. It is important that parents make appropriate plans now in case a required closure occurs.

I want to commend our maintenance staff for the outstanding job they do at keeping our schools clean and safe every day. They are following the NYSDOH cleaning guidance for schools and dedicating extra attention to disinfecting door knobs, railings, health offices and high-traffic areas each day.

If you have questions or would like more information on the Coronavirus, call the NYSDOH Novel Coronavirus Hotline at 1-888-364-3065 or visit their website at [www.health.ny.gov](http://www.health.ny.gov). We will keep you informed as any additional information becomes available.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Wood  
Superintendent of Schools