



RUTHVEN-AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

LEARNING TODAY FOR LIVING TOMORROW

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ANDREW WOIWOOD
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12 March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian and Community Members:

We understand that the Novel Coronavirus, now known as COVID-19, is causing much anxiety in our community, state and the world. There are many reports in the media each night that point out where new cases of it are and how it is spreading. It becomes even more concerning when hearing about illnesses and deaths around the world, and now recently in the United States. Because of this, we believed that it would be good to go over a few facts and let you know what we are doing to be prepared for COVID-19.

Graettinger-Terril and Ruthven-Ayrshire School Districts are working closely with Palo Alto County Public Health and the Iowa Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.

Here is what is known:

- The virus causing COVID-19 is a new coronavirus, not previously identified, and causes a respiratory illness ranging from a mild cold-like illness to severe respiratory disease.
- Similar to influenza, the people who are most likely to have severe disease and complications from COVID-19 are believed to be the very old, very young and those with other chronic or underlying medical conditions. However, influenza acts in the same manner and has been much more devastating to people around the world than COVID-19.
- There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19, so prevention is very important.
- **Currently, there are 16 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Iowa.** Experts predict there will eventually be community spread. IDPH, Palo Alto County Public Health and the GT and RA School Districts are preparing for when/if this happens.

How the virus spreads:

- COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads—through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

Here is what you can do now:

- As we already ask, keep your children home when they are sick. Students (and parents/guardians) who are ill, especially with acute respiratory symptoms (not allergies or chronic conditions), should stay home.
- Reinforce with your children that they should always cover their cough and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Remind them to wash their hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer) after they touch their face, use the restroom and before they eat.
- Tell children to avoid touching their mouth and nose since that is how germs get into the body.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (everyday household disinfectants are fine). Enhance cleaning of high touch surfaces like door knobs, toilet handles and sink handles.

- Plan for when community spread occurs. Ensure you have a plan to designate a caregiver, such as a family member or neighbor, for a sick child(ren) if you can't stay home. When needed, we will continue to communicate with you through our usual means such as emails, Facebook and our websites about any new information in regards to this virus.

You can find up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Iowa at <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus> and follow IDPH on Facebook at @IowaDepartmentofPublicHealth and Twitter at @IAPublicHealth, as well as the GT Mobile App and the GT and RA Facebook pages.

Please keep in mind that the actions outlined in this letter are things that we should be doing every day in response to influenza and colds and now will apply to COVID-19. Currently, influenza is circulating at a high level in the state and is of a more immediate concern than Coronavirus. Therefore, following the steps outlined in this letter will also help us very much with keeping flu and colds in check.

If you have any questions, please contact your building administrator.

Sincerely,

Andy Woiwood, GT/RA Superintendent

Chris Myers, GT Elementary Principal

Jon Josephson, RA MS/HS Principal

Jeremy Simington, GT MS/HS Principal