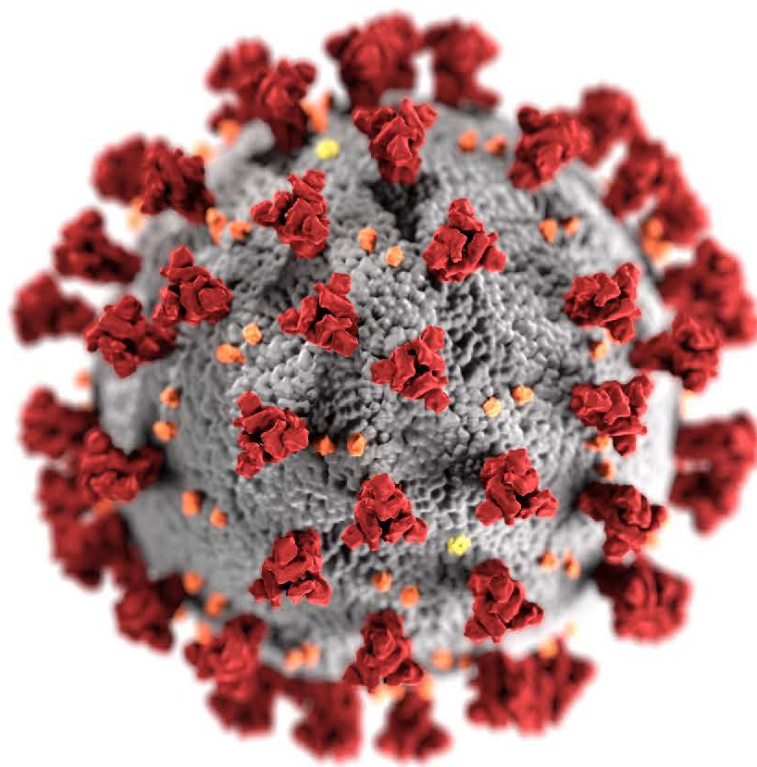


Toolkit for Communicating about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

For School Leaders



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This illustration was created at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A novel coronavirus, named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), was identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China in 2019. The illness caused by this virus has been named coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

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Toolkit for Communicating about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) Coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and which has now been detected in 57 locations internationally, including cases in the United States. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “Coronavirus Disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”).

-CDC website, updated February 28, 2020

“Currently, the State of Michigan has no confirmed cases of the novel Coronavirus, COVID-19, but the state is closely monitoring the situation as knowledge evolves daily. [On February 28, 2020] Governor Whitmer announced the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) where state, local, and federal agencies will coordinate statewide readiness and communication related to COVID-19. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will continue actively preparing, monitoring, and coordinating response activities through the SEOC.

At this time, the health risk to the general public of Michigan from COVID-19 remains low, but schools and public libraries can take common sense precautions to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Person-to-person spread of COVID-19 appears to spread via respiratory transmission. Symptoms are similar to those of influenza (e.g., fever, cough, and shortness of breath). The current outbreak is occurring during a time of year when respiratory illnesses from influenza and other viruses are highly prevalent. ...”

*-Dr. Michael F. Rice, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Michigan Department of Education
-Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Chief Medical Executive and Chief Deputy for Health,
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services*

-February 28, 2020, COVID-19 Updated Guidance Memo

Toolkit for Communicating about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

This resource highlights some of the ways school districts may choose to communicate about COVID-19. Always consider your school’s policies, codes of conduct, local community needs, and your local climate as you address the information needs of your stakeholders.

Remember, this is a public health issue. Please direct questions or inquiries about COVID-19 to your local health department.



Prepared by the **Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA)**

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This document has been reviewed by representatives from the Michigan Department of Education, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators. All sample materials have been reprinted with permission.

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Introduction: State Guidance on COVID-19

Note: If you have questions or need more information, MDHHS has developed a COVID-19 website located at michigan.gov/coronavirus. It is updated regularly with the most current available information. Visit the website for tools to assist with your preparations.

"...For schools, we all need to do what we can to keep students and staff engaged in the learning process while mitigating the spread of infections. We strongly recommend that schools and school districts partner with their local health departments to:

- *Report influenza-like activity, absenteeism, and potential school dismissals.*
- *Educate students and the community about COVID-19. ..."*

-Dr. Michael F. Rice, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Michigan Department of Education

-Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Chief Medical Executive and Chief Deputy for Health,
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

-February 28, 2020, COVID-19 Updated Guidance Memo

Encourage students, staff and families to use preventative hygiene practices.

- **Remain at home if you are sick and avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.**
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are unavailable.**
- **Cover cough with a tissue or sleeve. Provide adequate supplies within easy reach, including tissues and no-touch trash cans.**
- **Routinely clean frequently-touched surfaces.**

Use this Resource to Communicate.

This resource is organized according to the **RPIE** (Research, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation) process used by **school communicators** across the nation. **This process enables the schools to design and maintain a comprehensive, planned, two-way communication program** that helps build mutual understanding and support between the schools and its publics. The RPIE process involves four steps:

- 1) **Research:** Identify the issue and gather relevant information—through your own investigation/first-hand experience and/or that which is reported by others.
- 2) **Planning:** Use your research to develop a communication plan and messages; use identified tools to communicate with your target publics/audiences.
- 3) **Implementation:** Follow the steps in your communication plan to manage the information/seek input.
- 4) **Evaluation:** Examine your communication efforts to determine if communication goals were met. Use evaluation results to modify your communication plan, if needed.

If you have questions about the RPIE process or school public relations please contact your school communicator or the Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA) www.mspra.org.

1) Begin with Research.

- Identify information resources.
- Contact your local health department. Consider sharing after-hours contact information including cell phone numbers.
- If needed, see [Map to County Offices](#) with contact information. Ask the following:
 - Are you currently investigating any cases in our area?
 - Is there an advisory in place for our area?
 - Do you have any plans to issue an advisory for our area?
 - What is the district's responsibility if we are alerted or learn about someone having COVID-19 in the district? *Note - Make sure front office staff know what the correct protocol is for sharing this information with school administrators and the local health department.*
 - What are our next steps, if we do report?
 - How will the department continue to keep schools updated relative to new cases/new procedures? *Note - Consider updating your school community as you receive updates from your local health department. Ask for a link to share with families and school community for updates.*
 - Ask if the department has materials that should be shared with the school community.
 - Ask if the department has materials in other languages to share with families.
- Contact your county emergency management/preparedness official. Consider sharing after-hours contact information including cell phone numbers.
- Identify any students/programs with plans to travel to high-risk areas.
 - Travel Guidance - Encourage families to follow the CDC's information for travel, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.
- Seek out and use information from existing resources.
 - Query your professional organization's listserv.
 - Contact other districts in your immediate area.
 - Check with your legal counsel and be mindful of the district's obligations relative to civil rights laws.
 - Read the [news release](#) on the Governor's activation of State Emergency Operations Center to coordinate Michigan's response.
 - Read the [MDE and MDHHS updated guidance memo](#) and all updates that follow.

- Review the [CDC guidance](#) on prevention as well as [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).
- Go to the [MDHHS COVID-19 website](#) for resources and information.
- Additional considerations when doing your research:
 - Know what your school board policy says relative to health issues and how decisions are made about:
 - What steps should be followed when deciding to close a school or schools?
 - What steps need to occur while school is closed (instruction, pupil accounting, staff contracts, and cleaning protocols for buses and classes, among others)?
 - Who determines when students should return to school?
 - What considerations should be made about siblings who attend in other school buildings?

2) Plan your Communication.

- Identify target audiences (parents, students, teachers, central office staff, bus drivers, custodians, attendance coordinators, board members, and administrators, among others). What do your audiences need to know?
- Work with your local health department to produce key messages.
- Identify effective communication tools. How does each audience receive its information?
- Assign tasks and establish a timeline. Who is going to do what, when?
- Identify a primary contact person. Who will coordinate the overall communication effort?
- Add resource links from MDHHS and CDC to your district's website.
- Talk with staff about building time in student schedules for hand-washing before meals.
- Review influenza plans, specifically those for sustaining learning, support services, and business operations, if schools are closed for an extended period.
- Talk with cleaning staff/contractors about intensifying cleaning practices to prevent and stop the virus.

3) Implement your Plan.

Develop Talking Points/Key Messages.

These may include:

- Our primary concern is for the health and safety of our students, staff, and community.
- Our schools have been closely monitoring the situation regarding COVID-19.
- We are following the guidance of our local health department and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). We are also following our board policy.
- As always, our schools work closely with public health officials and follow all of their expert recommendations to best ensure the safety of everyone in our school community.
- Learning at our school primarily occurs inside classrooms with face-to-face teaching by certified instructors using interactive technology tools. Any guidance on administering and recovering the learning that may be lost during a potential school closing will come from the Michigan Department of Education.
- At this time, the district is researching its options should a school closure be necessary. [District name] takes direction around health matters from local health departments and the CDC and will continue to keep communication lines open as we monitor the situation. The health and safety of our students and staff are paramount. We want to assure you that we are working to determine our options moving forward.

Toolkit for Communicating about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

- Our schools are prepared to intensify cleaning practices throughout our buildings and will follow all directions provided by public health to prevent and limit the spread of the virus.
- According to public health officials, the way COVID-19 is spread is very similar to the flu and common colds. For this reason, we are encouraging our students and staff to actively wash their hands and take all of the same precautions they would normally take to avoid these illnesses.
- Please rely on updates posted to the [MDHHS COVID-19](#) website (Michigan Department of Health & Human Services) or the [CDC website](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) for the most accurate and timely information on the virus.
- In regard to children specifically, please see the [CDC's Frequently Asked Questions and Answers: Coronavirus Disease-2019 \(COVID-19\) and Children](#) and this [MDHHS Fact Sheet](#).
- We will continue to watch the developments surrounding COVID-19 closely and will take the appropriate steps necessary to protect the health of all of our students, staff, and school community.
- We remain sensitive to implicit biases that may be associated with the virus. All members of our school community have the right to be safe, valued, and respected.

Key Messages: Potential school closing due to illness

- ***We have open and effective lines of communication with our public health officials and will alert students, staff, and parents if we receive direction related to COVID-19.***
- ***Any potential school closing (and reopening) due to illness will be guided by public health officials. While education is important, the health and wellbeing of our students and staff are far more significant.***

Communicate with Your Audiences.

- Share information with families using the methods that work best for your district (website, letters home, alert system, newsletters, and social media, among others).
- Include the link to local health department updates in all your materials and posts. Share and like posts from the CDC, MDHHS and other public health social media sites.
- Consider using these social media posts:
 - We've talked to our local health department **on this date at this time** and there are currently no cases of COVID-19 in our county; as of **this date and time** there are no advisories.
 - We know this information can change quickly. Please contact your local health department directly for the latest information.

OR

 - We are following the lead of our local health department as it relates to COVID-19. Here is the link to our local health department's most recent information.

Additional sample posts can be found at the end of the toolkit.

- Remind everyone: Regardless of the local advisory status, use recommended preventative hygiene practices.
- Remember: Students/school groups may travel outside of the district or outside the country to participate in sporting events, special trips, camps, and other activities. COVID-19 is not geographically bound.

Board/Administration

- Review your board policy and procedures and follow school closing protocols, if needed.
- Follow your local health department's recommended course of action.
- Post recommended preventative hygiene practices in your buildings and meeting rooms.
- Check with the local health department or the CDC to see if there are resources available in other languages.

School Staff

- Remind staff to use recommended preventative hygiene practices.
- Provide talking points to staff to share with students, parents and community members who may ask questions.
- Ensure staff are practicing appropriate protocols regarding reporting any cases of COVID-19.
- As updates are provided, be sure to update staff about information and available resources.

Students

- Remind students to use recommended preventative hygiene practices.
- Remind students to be sensitive to peers from varying backgrounds and cultures. COVID-19 is not isolated to a particular country and it is vital that we avoid stereotypical assumptions or discriminatory actions.

Parents

- Repeat your key message about keeping students safe.
- Remind parents to use recommended preventative hygiene practices.
- Remind parents that the schools are following the recommendations of the CDC and the local health department. It is important to remember that we are educators, not health experts.

Volunteers

- Repeat your key message about keeping students safe.
- Remind volunteers to use preventative hygiene practices.

Media

- Designate a spokesperson.
- Use your key messages.
- Remind them that schools are not the experts in this area. Refer them to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the local health departments and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) for COVID-19 information and guidance.

Community Members

- Remind them that schools are not the experts in this area. We rely on the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the local health departments and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) for information and guidance.
- Remind community members to use preventative hygiene practices.
- Remind community members to be sensitive to neighbors from varying backgrounds and cultures. COVID-19 is not isolated to a particular country and it is vital that we avoid stereotypical assumptions or discriminatory actions.

4) Evaluate your Communication.

- Keep track of COVID-19 related phone calls and inquiries.
- Monitor any rescheduled/postponed events to determine if/how communication could be improved.
- Ask for feedback.
- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- What would you do differently?
- Adjust your communication plan for next time based on your evaluation.

Additional Planning Tips for School Leaders

- Separate sick students and staff from others until they can go home. When feasible, identify a “sick room” through which others do not regularly pass.
- Examine existing contracts for any employee issues or stipulations if school is dismissed or if staff are asked to stay home if they are ill.
- Review school curriculum and ensure plans are adaptable and flexible to ensure the required hours of instruction are completed.
- Investigate how your meal programs and after-school programs may be affected if you have to dismiss a school in your district or cancel large gatherings of individuals for sporting events, concerts, or celebrations.
- Schools should engage directly with their local health departments in preparing parental communications.
- Encourage influenza vaccines to help avoid other seasonal respiratory illness.
- Review additional documentation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC has developed guidance for child care programs, K-12 schools, and colleges/universities. Those documents are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-forschools.html>. Decisions to exclude a student or staff member, or to close schools altogether, must be taken on a case-by-case basis, in coordination with local health departments. These decisions are local in nature and could vary from district to district or school to school.

-Dr. Michael F. Rice, Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Michigan Department of Education

-Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Chief Medical Executive and Chief Deputy for Health,
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

-February 28, 2020, COVID-19 Updated Guidance Memo

Resources: Letters/Other Communication

Note: Verify facts with CDC and MDHHS before sending communication out to families.

From Muskegon Area ISD: Letter to Parents & Staff

Dear Parents,

With the increased intensity of news reports and social media posts regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), comes speculation about the impact this virus may eventually have on school communities. It is important for you to know the most accurate and timely information about this health concern.

1. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has published this [Fact Sheet](#) to explain what the virus is, how it is spread, who is at risk, and how to protect yourself from the virus. It explains the risk to the general public for contracting the virus is low, while travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at increased risk.
2. There is also a CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document that specifically addresses concerns about children and the virus. It explains that so far there is no evidence to suggest that children are more susceptible to the virus than the general population.
3. Additional updates (including current case information for Michigan) can be found at the [MDHHS COVID-19](#) website (Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website).

We have added these links to our school district website for your convenience.

As always, our schools work closely with public health officials and follow all of their expert recommendations to best ensure the safety of everyone in our school community.

Of course learning at our school primarily occurs inside classrooms with face-to-face teaching by certified instructors using interactive technology tools. Any guidance on recovering the learning that may be lost during a potential school closing will come from the Michigan Department of Education. In the meantime, be assured that our schools are prepared to intensify cleaning practices throughout our buildings and will follow all directions provided by public health to prevent and limit the virus.

According to public health officials, the way COVID-19 is spread is very similar to the flu and common colds. For this reason, we are encouraging our students and staff to actively wash their hands and take all of the same precautions they would normally take to avoid these illnesses. Please encourage your children to do the same at home as they build healthy habits!

We have open and effective lines of communication with our public health officials and will alert students, staff and parents if we receive direction related to COVID-19. Any potential school closing due to illness will be guided by public health officials. While education is important, the health and wellbeing of our students and staff are far more significant.

Sincerely,
Superintendent

Resources: Letters/Other Communication

From Oakland Schools ISD: Letter to Parents & Staff

Dear (District Name) Families,

Many of you are inquiring about prevention and safety related to the Coronavirus Disease 2019, or COVID-19.

First, it is important to note there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Michigan, but residents are still being urged by the Governor's office to take all necessary precautions to prepare and keep themselves and their families safe. According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the risk of outbreak is low, but the State is still making preparations to limit the spread and impact of COVID-19.

Rest assured, (District name) continues to work closely with and follow guidance from the Oakland County Health Division, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The best prevention for COVID-19, and any other virus, such as the cold or flu, is to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or upper sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, please stay home and avoid contact with others.

The Oakland County Health Division has provided the attached fact sheet to help address concerns: [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) What You Need to Know](#).

The CDC provides a situation summary that is updated daily as needed. [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Situation Summary](#), as does the Michigan Department of Health and Human services [Communicable & Chronic Diseases](#). The CDC will continue to prepare for the potential spread of COVID-19 and will provide guidance to communities [\(CDC Protects and Prepares Communities\)](#).

For any questions, contact the Oakland County Health Division at (248) 858-1280 or health@oakgov.com or visit <https://www.oakgov.com/health>

We will update families as appropriate moving forward.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

Resources: Letters/Other Communication

From Washtenaw ISD: Letter to Families

Dear Families,

We are reaching out because you have likely been hearing concerning reports in the news regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Washtenaw ISD is in close communication with the Washtenaw County Health Department and will continue to follow their guidance and recommendations regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. **At this time, there are no confirmed or suspected cases in Washtenaw County or Michigan, and the risk for COVID-19 remains low for Washtenaw County.**

We want to remind our school community that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same as preventing the cold and flu, and include:

- Frequently washing your hands with soap and water.
- Covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home when you are sick.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend the use of facemasks for the general public.

The safety, health, and well-being of our students, staff and school community will, as always, continue to be our priority. We will continue monitoring the development of COVID-19 and plan accordingly in partnership with local, state, and federal health and government officials.

We have attached a fact sheet from the Washtenaw County Health Department with additional information. If you would like to learn more about COVID-19, please visit www.michigan.gov/coronavirus or www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call your healthcare provider or reach out to Ashley Krscynski, WISD Communications and Public Relations Specialist, at (734) 994-8100 x1321.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

Resources: Letters/Other Communication

From Washtenaw ISD: Memo to Staff

Washtenaw ISD is in close communication with the Washtenaw County Health Department and will continue to follow their guidance and recommendations regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak. At this time, there are no confirmed or suspected cases in Washtenaw County or Michigan, and the risk for COVID-19 remains low for Washtenaw County.

We want to remind our school community that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same as preventing the cold and flu, and include:

- Frequently washing your hands with soap and water.
- Covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home when you are sick.
- *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend the use of facemasks for the general public.*

The safety, health, and well-being of our staff, students and school community will, as always, continue to be our priority. We will continue monitoring the development of COVID-19 and plan accordingly in partnership with local, state, and federal health and government officials.

Learn more about COVID-19:

- Washtenaw County Health Department's [Coronavirus Fact Sheet](#)
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' [Coronavirus website](#), plus:
 - [Fact Sheet in English](#)
 - [Fact Sheet in Traditional Chinese](#)
 - [Fact Sheet in Simplified Chinese](#)
 - [Fact Sheet in Spanish](#)
 - [Fact Sheet in Arabic](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Coronavirus website](#), plus:
 - [What the public should do to prevent the spread of Coronavirus](#)
- [Speaking Up Against Racism Around the New Coronavirus](#) (from Teaching Tolerance)

Resources: Letters/Other Communication

Okemos Public School District: Family Newsletter Article

The Okemos Public School District is monitoring the situation regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The US Center for Disease Control recommends the following precautionary measures to reduce risk:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

The practices identified above are taught as part of our health curriculum to help protect students from common illnesses such as a cold and influenza. Our teachers will review these strategies at school, and we encourage parents/guardians to review these strategies with your child as well.

If your child is ill, keep them home from school and notify the school of your child's absence. A child with a heavy cough and cold, vomiting, and/or fever should stay home. A child must be fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school. We encourage parents/guardians to seek medical attention from a healthcare professional should your child have a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath.

We will continue to watch the developments surrounding COVID-19 with the assistance of Ingham County Health Department and related agencies. If needed, we will communicate additional steps necessary to protect the health of all of our students, families and staff.

For more information about COVID-19, please visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/) website.

Resources: Letters/Other Communication

From Ingham ISD: Staff and Family Alert Message

Dear Staff and Families,

There is a significant amount of information circulating regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the media, and on social media, and it can be confusing. At this time, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the State of Michigan. Ingham ISD follows the guidance and expertise of national, state and local health officials to help protect our students and staff from all communicable diseases.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. If your child is ill, keep them home from school and notify the school of your child's absence. A child with a heavy cough and cold, vomiting, and/or fever should stay home. A child must be fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school. We encourage parents/guardians to seek medical attention from a healthcare professional should your child have a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath.

We can all take preventative measures to minimize the spread of communicable diseases. Health authorities indicate that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same recommendations for preventing the spread of the flu virus. The [Michigan Department of Health Human Services](#) advises the following steps can be taken to prevent spread of flu and the common cold that will also help prevent COVID-19, including:

- Washing your hands with soap and water.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or upper sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoiding contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home if you are sick and contact your healthcare provider.

We encourage you to stay informed from experts in the health field. For the most up-to-date information from national, state and local health officials you can visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) or the [Ingham County Health Department](#).

We will continue to monitor the situation, in partnership with our health experts, and will keep you informed if additional measures need to be taken.

Thank you for entrusting us with the care of your children.

Resources: Letters/Other Communication

Sample Social Media Posts

Note: Verify facts with CDC and MDHHS before posting anything to social media.

Sample #1-Initial Announcement

Facebook:

The safety, health, and well-being of our students and staff are of the utmost importance at all times. <District Name> is closely monitoring events surrounding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Currently, there are no confirmed cases in the State of Michigan.

IMPORTANT: It is important to note that we are in the midst of our regular cold and flu season. Local and federal health authorities indicate that the best ways to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 are the same recommendations for preventing the spread of the flu virus.

<District Name> will continue to monitor the situation and follow the recommendations of the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#), the <Insert County> Health Department and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) regarding communicable disease protocols.

Twitter:

There are no confirmed cases of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Michigan. Stay informed about COVID-19 from trusted sources such as the Center for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

Visual:



Sample #2-Recommended Preventative Hygiene Practices

Facebook:

Stay informed about the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) from trusted sources such as the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus. Prevent the spread of the COVID-19 with the same preventative measures used for the flu. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services advises the following steps can be taken to prevent spread of the flu and the common cold that will also help prevent COVID-19, including:

- Washing your hands with soap and water.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or upper sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoiding contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home if you are sick and contact your healthcare provider.

Twitter:

Stay informed about the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) from trusted sources such as the [CDC \(@cdcgov\)](https://twitter.com/cdcgov). Prevent the spread of the COVID-19 with the same preventative measures used for the flu, see [MDHHS \(@MichiganHHS\)](https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs) [Michigan Department of Health Human Services](https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs) website.

Visual:



Sample #3-Continued Monitoring

Facebook:

<District Name> is monitoring the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation through proven and trustworthy sources: our local health department, the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) (MDHHS), and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC). These health officials believe the risk to our school community is low at this time as there are no confirmed cases in the State of Michigan.

While a new type of illness can be scary, we can protect our students, teachers, and the broader community by using simple everyday actions that protect people from other types of respiratory viruses. Our staff are working carefully to encourage these simple and effective habits of frequent hand washing, covering every cough or sneeze and cleaning classroom tables/surfaces frequently. This is important not just to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but to help prevent the spread of other infections that can lead to student illness and absences.

Twitter:

<District Name> is monitoring the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation through health experts at [MDHHS](#) and [CDC](#). There are no confirmed cases in Michigan at this time. Prevent the spread by taking the same precautionary measures as you would for the flu.

Visual:



Resources: Letters/Other Communication

Sample Media Statements

Sample #1

The absolute safety, health, and well-being of our students and staff are of the utmost importance at all times. <District Name> is closely monitoring events surrounding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Currently, there are no confirmed cases in the State of Michigan. <District Name> will continue to monitor the situation and follow the recommendations of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the <Insert County> Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control regarding communicable disease protocols.

It is important to note that we are in the midst of our regular cold and flu season. Local and federal health authorities indicate that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same recommendations for preventing the spread of the flu virus. We encourage our families and community to all take preventative measures to minimize the spread of communicable diseases.

Sample #2

<District Name> is keeping track of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation through proven and trustworthy sources: our local health department, the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services \(MDHHS\)](#), and the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). These health officials believe the risk to our school community is low at this time as there are no confirmed cases in the State of Michigan.

While a new type of illness can be scary, we can protect our students, teachers, and the broader community by using simple, everyday actions that protect people from other types of respiratory viruses. Our staff are working carefully to encourage these simple and effective habits of frequent hand washing, covering every cough or sneeze and cleaning classroom tables/surfaces frequently. This is important not just to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but to help prevent the spread of other infections that can lead to student illness and absences.

Sample #3

<District Name> continues to follow the guidance of local, state and federal health officials with regard to all communicable diseases. While there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the State of Michigan, we continue to remind our school community that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same preventions that are recommended for the spread of the flu and common cold.

As we are still in cold and flu season, parents, students and staff members are encouraged to follow basic prevention guidelines against the flu and upper respiratory viruses which include avoiding contact with people who are sick and washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and using alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Sample #4

<District Name> follows the guidance and expertise of national, state and local health officials to help protect our students and staff from all communicable diseases. The District is aware that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

We can all take preventative measures to minimize the spread of communicable diseases. Local and federal health authorities indicate that the best ways to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 are the same recommendations for preventing the spread of the flu virus. Basic prevention guidelines against the flu and upper respiratory viruses include avoiding contact with people who are sick and washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and using alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Additional Resources

- [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) - fact sheets and resources in multiple languages
 - [Joint memo from the MDHHS and the Michigan Department of Education](#) - February 28, 2020
 - [Map to identify your county health department](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) - fact sheets, proper hand-washing posters, instructions on what to do if you are sick, current information and updates in multiple languages
 - [Flu season vs. pandemic infographic](#)
 - [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - [Public Health Image Library \(PHIL\)](#)
- Allegan County Health Department (used with permission)
 - [COVID-19 Community Member FAQ](#)
 - [Interim Guidance for Schools, Businesses and Non-Profits](#)
- Sample School District websites:
 - [Ingham ISD](#)



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