

Okoboji Parents and Families:

We wanted to take a moment to update you on the latest information regarding our response to the COVID-19 situation developing across our state and nation. As you know, this is all very fluid and things are changing rapidly. This update will give you a current state as of Friday, March 13th, 2020. We anticipate additional updates as the situation develops.

We have been, are, and will continue to stay abreast of guidelines and recommendations coming from the Centers for Disease Control, the Iowa Department of Public Health, and the Governor's Office. We are committed to following their lead. At this time, the state has not recommended school closures. They have issued guidance for schools focused mainly on reducing the chance of exposure and spread.

We are implementing measures that align with these guidelines which include increased efforts to sanitize our facilities and increase social distancing. Some of these efforts include:

- **Limiting visitors to our buildings.** Beginning on Monday, March 16th, we are going to limit visitors and volunteers to our buildings and restrict them to the building offices only. This is aimed at reducing the number of different people in our buildings and thereby reducing exposure. This effort will include restricting access by outside groups that normally use our facilities during school and non-school hours.
- **Postponing or canceling all non-essential events such as field trips, concerts, contests, athletic competitions, etc.** Once again the goal is to reduce the number of social interactions and increase social distance to contain and reduce the chance for exposure and spreading of germs.
- **We are implementing these measures immediately and plan to continue them through at least April 3rd.** This is the date that has been set by many of our state universities as well. This situation is very fluid and we will continue to monitor as the days progress.

We are also working to increase our normal efforts in the area of sanitization of our facilities and equipment, along with an intensified focus on personal hygiene efforts among students and staff. This will include:

- **Increasing access to hand sanitizer with containers in each classroom.** We will ask students to regularly use sanitizer on a schedule appropriate to each building.
- **Providing sanitizing wipes to each classroom.** These will be used to perform regular cleaning of common surfaces such as countertops and desks.
- **Increasing the timeliness of disinfecting frequently touched surfaces like door handles and bathroom fixtures.**

- **Providing wipes specifically designed for use on technology devices that will be available to students and staff for cleaning and disinfecting their devices.** We are asking students to avoid sharing devices as well.
- **Implementing food-service precautions.** A'viands has removed all shared items from the lunch line such as sharing bins, condiment pumps, and squeeze bottles. We have transitioned to individual condiment cups/packets. We also have sanitizing stations at the beginning of the lunch line. Our serving lines will change out tongs in the salad bar often to help avoid exposure.

The Iowa Department of Public Health recommends that those returning from travel to areas with community spread of COVID-19 should self-isolate. Community spread should be determined on a case by case basis and we believe [THIS](#) is a good reference for those questioning their exposure. Absences due to self-isolation will be excused. [HERE](#) is a document that shares what self-isolation is. **Please note that Okoboji School District is requiring any student or staff member who travels outside of the United States to self-isolate for fourteen days upon return. This self-isolation requirement will be in place until further notice.**

Finally, you play a vital role in helping to prevent the spread of the virus. Please follow steps laid out by the public health experts:

- Cover your mouth with your upper arm or a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- 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 not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- **Stay home if any flu-type symptoms present themselves.**

We fully understand these procedures will impact our activities, both school-sponsored and outside of school. Many of these events have been decided for us by the various state associations. We have shared a [Google doc](#) with those postponements and cancelations and will continue to update it and share via social media. As of right now, we will not be taking our activity groups to competitions or performances or allowing other school groups to attend competitions at Okoboji. We have also made the decision to eliminate the usage of all school facilities by all non-school sponsored activity groups until April 3rd. This includes all youth practices, adult leagues, postseason banquets, etc. The only groups using the facilities at Okoboji through April 3rd will be the 7th-12th grade school-sponsored sports and activities. A decision on any events scheduled beyond April 3rd will be made as more information is shared with us. Obviously, if classes at Okoboji Community Schools are canceled, that would include our activities as well.

We are working our way through an unprecedented situation. Decisions are being made as a result of the guidelines shared with us by the Iowa Department of Public Health in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control, and are in the best interest of our entire community. We thank you for your understanding and assistance as we move through this difficult and ever-changing situation.