

March 2, 2020

To Students and Families:

At DC Public Schools (DCPS), we are committed to ensuring the well-being of our students. Communicating home about issues that impact school communities is important to fostering strong partnerships with families, and I would like to provide an important update around coronavirus (also known as COVID-19).

On Friday, Mayor Bowser signed a [Mayor's Order](#) to establish DC Health and the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency as the lead agencies directing the District's preparation, monitoring, and response. As of Sunday, March 1, [DC Health](#) reports there are no confirmed cases of coronavirus in Washington, DC. But as with any public health concern, we need to be prepared and informed.

Prevention is our priority at this time, especially during cold and flu season. Common coronaviruses can cause symptoms similar to a common cold, such as fever, cough, sore throat, and feeling unwell. The symptoms that are currently being seen with the current coronavirus infection are fever and respiratory symptoms such as cough and shortness of breath. DC Health continues to recommend the same precautions that help to prevent the spread of those common illnesses:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when feeling sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

We are ensuring that all school bathrooms are stocked with soap and schools have hand sanitizer, as well as maintaining custodial protocols for cleaning and disinfecting. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a helpful [handwashing](#) resource page with activities for families and [videos](#) in English and Spanish.

We are monitoring the situation and working closely with DC Health and other District agencies on emergency preparedness procedures, as well as following guidance from the CDC regarding planning for a coronavirus outbreak. As the situation evolves, we will consider alternative learning environments to ensure the safety of our students, staff, and families, while minimizing disruption to the school year. We are also considering alternative plans for students scheduled to take international trips this spring and summer.

The District Government will continue to share critical updates around coronavirus on the DC Health website, dchealth.dc.gov/coronavirus. Please be assured that the health and safety of our students and staff is always paramount. If you have any further questions, please email chancellor@k12.dc.gov.

Sincerely,

Lewis D. Ferebee, Ed.D.
Chancellor