

RP Update

Tuesday, March 2, 2020

ALERT

Dear Ray-Pec families,

Schools have seen an increased number of students and staff with symptoms of influenza and other winter illnesses in recent weeks. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control has issued recent advisories related to the new coronavirus.

The District has some important information to share with you regarding our efforts to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff, and visitors.

About the flu

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses and can cause mild to severe illness. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the main symptoms with this year's seasonal flu include headaches, fever, cough, chills, muscle aches, fatigue, and sore throat. Typically, flu symptoms come on suddenly and last 5-7 days.

About Novel Coronavirus

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses with common symptoms similar to the flu, which include a fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus, it has the potential to spread quickly, and it has the potential to cause severe illness in some people.

Please note that as of today, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Missouri. Currently, the risk of infection is low for the general public in the United States.

What the School District is doing to reduce risk of flu or other illness:

- Ensuring our schools are equipped with disinfectants and cleaning supplies.
- Sanitizing classrooms.
- Increasing efforts to clean and disinfect hard surfaces, including desks, doorknobs, computers, tables, and other equipment used daily by students and staff.
- Disinfecting buses.
- Reminding students to cover their mouth with their arm or tissues when sneezing or coughing and encouraging frequent handwashing or use of instant hand sanitizer.
- Sending home sick children immediately when symptoms are evident.
- Sending home sick staff immediately.
- Working with families to minimize any missed learning opportunities.

How you can reduce risk of flu or coronavirus:

While Ray-Pec is taking these steps to reduce the risks of spreading illness, we need families to help! All families are urged to continue the practice of healthy behaviors, which include, but are not limited to:

- **Wash hands frequently with soap and water.**
- Cover nose and mouth with a sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth to prevent the spread of germs;
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces and objects
- Stay home from school and work when you are sick. Children should be kept home until they are **fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.**
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

We also want to reassure you that the District has a pandemic crisis action plan in place in the event of a serious outbreak of illness. The District will continue to work with partners at the Department of Health and Senior Services and the Cass County Health Department as they monitor and manage the current situation with both the flu and novel coronavirus. We will provide updates as needed.

As always, the District will share additional information as needed. Thank you for your partnership as we work to keep our students and staff healthy and safe each day.

Links to additional resources:

- Ray-Pec [Health Services website](#)
- Missouri information about coronavirus: [Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services](#)
- More information about the flu is available on the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) website](#).
- For the latest updates on the coronavirus, as well as travel advisories: [Centers for Disease Control](#)