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160 S. Hollywood Street • Memphis, TN 38112 • (901) 416-5300 • [www.scsk12.org](http://www.scsk12.org)

Sunday, March 8, 2020

Dear Shelby County Schools Families,

Earlier today, March 8, the Shelby County Health Department (SCHD) confirmed the first case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Shelby County. While we all hoped this moment would not come, the District has been proactively preparing for this possibility, and we are implementing a precautionary response plan for all of our schools.

It is important to listen to facts and not respond to fear. The SCHD has advised that there is no immediate risk to the general public in Shelby County, and there is no expected risk to school-age children at this time. But now is the time to proactively prepare for the possibility of local community transmission of the virus. The health and safety of our students, their families and our staff members continues to be our highest priority. As we monitor the situation, we will continue to follow the guidance of our local health and safety officials; however, we are also enhancing internal protocols and providing additional resources, including:

- Providing CDC-approved cleaning agents to every school;
- Ensuring all bathrooms are continuously stocked with soap and paper towels, and encouraging students and staff to wash hands frequently;
- Ensuring principals and school nurses have the resources and guidance needed to detect and report symptoms exhibited at school and provide approved health guidance for any affected individuals;
- Working in close partnership with the SCHD and continuing to update our protocols as the situation evolves; and
- Providing ongoing communication to families, staff and our school communities as new developments are learned.

Please know there is no guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the SCHD or other health officials to close schools at this time. As you know from previous inclement weather situations, closing schools is an extreme measure that can be disruptive for staff and families. This decision will not be taken lightly and would only be made after SCS has consulted with public health experts.

As a reminder, we are emphasizing to all of our staff and students the critical importance of practicing general viral infection prevention measures, including:

- Covering a cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve;
- Washing hands regularly for at least 20 seconds;
- Avoiding any touching of the face;
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick;
- Getting a flu shot – it's never too late; and
- Staying home if there are symptoms of illness, as well as telling a doctor the symptoms and any travel history.

We appreciate your understanding and patience as we continue work through these unique circumstances. We are providing consistent communication to all of our school leaders to ensure they have the latest facts in case any questions arise. Additionally, we will continue to share updates at [www.scsk12.org](http://www.scsk12.org).

Respectfully,

Shelby County Schools