

Manson School District

March 12, 2020

Dear Parents, Staff and Community Members,

I am writing today to update you on Manson School District's current response to the COVID-19 (Corona) Virus. The pace of information and actions being taken by government and business entities has been staggering in the last 24-48 hours. This letter will help you understand the steps we are taking in your schools and give you some insight into what may happen in the coming weeks.

We have taken several proactive measures in the last few weeks to minimize the spreading of the virus in our community:

- Cleaning and sanitizing of school facilities on a daily basis
- Modeling and teaching of good hygienic practices
 - We are emphasizing the most important thing we can all do which is to frequently wash your hands with soap and water several times each day
- Strongly encouraging students and staff who are ill to stay home
- Minimizing large group social contact opportunities by canceling/postponing of indoor events, sports and activities.
- We have restricted out of district travel and will now be eliminating any non-essential travel.
- We are encouraging and supporting community groups in their choices to minimize or postpone non-critical public gatherings.

These additional steps are being put into place:

- **Limiting Non-Essential Contact:** As an added precaution, we are putting a hold on volunteers and visitors from entering school buildings. Parents will continue to be allowed to visit schools for essential business only.
- Beginning March 13 – all athletic contests and games (including outdoor) will be canceled through at least April 12th. Outdoor athletic practices will continue as planned.
- We are in the process of changing our parent conferences from an in-person format to a phone conference. Your student's school will contact you to confirm your already scheduled time slot and determine if interpretation services will be needed.

Though the immediate future is not clear to anyone a growing understanding is developing that our region (including the Lake Chelan Valley) will be impacted further by this pandemic. **Our schools will remain open** until we reach a point where the local health officials or State government advise or order us to close. We have not yet reached this point.

Current thinking by State officials indicate a short term closure would have minimal impact on slowing the progress of the disease. It is thought closures of at least 5-6 weeks may be necessary. It is important that each family begin to proactively plan for this growing possibility. Having discussions with family members, trusted neighbors, etc. about alternative childcare options for your children is appropriate in our current timeframe.

Our school staff and administration are currently having discussions on what services to our families could we provide if we were forced to close for a sustained period of time.

Could we:

- Provide meals for children who depend on breakfast and lunch from our food service program?
- Provide childcare for children of health care workers, first responders and our most at-risk students whose families cannot find childcare?
- Provide some level of educational service to students? If so, what format?

As we develop contingencies and solidify our plans we will communicate this information with all of you.

Though we are not advising keeping students home if they are healthy, parents wishing to have their children stay at home may choose to do so. The absences will be excused. Please follow the normal absence procedure and call your child's school as soon as possible.

Finally, some advice for helping our children navigate this period of uncertainty. Children of all ages will need to see us modeling a sense of hopefulness, optimism and purpose.

Younger children support:

- Answer questions when they ask, but don't offer more information than they request
- Limit exposure to media (television, social media)
- Keep their schedules and routines as much as possible
- Model and practice good hygiene together
- Help them be proactive in cleaning and sanitizing their own spaces

For the most current information on the COVID-19 (Corona) Virus please go to the Department of health Website at <https://www.doh.wa.gov>

Together we will work through these challenging times,



Matt Charlton, Superintendent
Manson School District