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## Gasconade County R-I School District

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*Home of the Bearcats*

Dr. Scott Smith, Superintendent



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March 13, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

With COVID-19 (coronavirus) on the minds of so many around the world and here at home, there is no higher priority for the Gasconade County R-1 School District than the safety of our students, staff and community. While there are no known cases in our area, I would like to take this opportunity to share the proactive measures we have been taking and provide accurate information about the COVID-19 virus.

**INFORMATION ON COVID-19:** As we have learned, the coronavirus is a respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath. Most cases are mild, but it's important to limit the spread of the disease. Senior citizens and those with existing health problems are most at risk. Preventative actions include avoiding close contact with others, avoiding touching one's face, washing your hands often, and good hygiene.

Additional information regarding COVID-19 is available through the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services statewide public hotline, 1-877-435-8411. This hotline is operated by medical professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also has information at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

**PREVENTATIVE MEASURES:** As our custodial staff members clean the buildings, they are prioritizing high traffic areas and regularly touched surfaces multiple times a day. All rooms throughout the district are sanitized with industrial-strength cleaner each evening. To prevent the spread of germs, we are emphasizing thorough hand-washing and cough etiquette. Our staff is taking extra precautions to ensure our younger students wash properly. All efforts are being made to keep the schools sanitary and safe.

**ACADEMIC PLANS:** Currently, we do not plan to close school for COVID-19. At this time, it has not been recommended by health officials to consider closing our school. However, if this changes, we will let our parents and community know as soon as possible.

Administrators and staff are developing *Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI)* in the event they are needed. This is an initiative promoted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to maximize the education of all students in times of inclement weather, illness, etc. In the event this is needed, pre-school students through 4th grade will receive paper packets of schoolwork to take home. Students in grades 5th through 12th, will have online assignments through the Google Classroom platform. For students without internet access, an alternative method will be provided.

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** At this time, activities, competitions and trips are being evaluated on a case by case basis. If a change is made in the original schedule, participants will be notified as soon as possible.

**EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS:** Children may experience anxiety during this time. Please take the time to communicate with your child to ease their concerns of the virus. There are many resources available to assist including:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>.

**ATTENDANCE:** Please do not send your child to school if he or she is sick. Please contact the school as soon as possible to report the absence and report specific symptoms. At this time, the recommendation from Gasconade County Health Department remains that a student must be fever free without medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school.

We are continuing to monitor this situation very closely. We continue to be in regular communication with the Gasconade County Health Department. We are also obtaining the latest updates from the CDC and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Any district updates will be conveyed through our regular communication methods including email, messaging system, and social media.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Sincerely,



Dr. Scott Smith

Superintendent

Gasconade County R-1 School District