

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Authorized by:** Will Schofield, Superintendent  
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**Topic:** Message to Community Regarding COVID-19

The reported spread of COVID-19 in the United States continues to be a concern for us all. As predicted, this remains a very fluid situation and the Hall County School District continues its work to ensure it has the most accurate and current information. We are prepared to take appropriate actions based on the guidance received from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Georgia Department of Public Health, the District 02 Health Department, and the Georgia Department of Education.

**At this time, our health partners indicate the overall risk to the general public remains low and there has been no guidance indicating a need to cancel school in Hall County.** Should there be a confirmed case in our community involving a student or staff member, our district would receive and follow updated guidance on what actions it would need to take.

Nevertheless, we understand that reports and rumors about potential cases in the metro-Atlanta area prompt uneasiness, concerns, and questions. Unfortunately, there are a lot of rumors and misinformation circulating. At times like this, it is important to rely on our health partners for information and guidance on what steps to take to minimize the spread of illness. With that in mind, families are encouraged to refer to the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/) or <https://www.hallco.org/web/coronavirus/> for the latest information regarding this illness and to <https://www.hallco.org/web/> for updated information regarding our district's response.

**Our school district's response continues to focus on minimizing the risk to students, employees, and families while keeping disruptions to instruction to a minimum.** In addition, we are committed to keeping our stakeholders informed about the steps the HCSD is taking to address COVID-19 concerns.

- As has been shared previously, we continue to educate about **the importance of frequent handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and the need to stay home if one is ill.**
- In addition, our custodians and transportation team members have reviewed **proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures and are paying particular attention to high-touch**

**surfaces** (like doorknobs, faucet handles, bus seats, etc.). If there should be a suspected case at a local school, the HCSD would follow the Health Department's guidance regarding additional cleaning measures.

- **The HCSD continues to monitor travel advisories, as well as travel outside of the country by students and team members, and we will update our enrollment/attendance procedures according to the CDC guidance.** We are applying that guidance to those individuals returning from travel outside the United States from areas identified as level 2 or higher that are experiencing widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19. (As of March 11, 2020, this includes China, Iran, South Korea, Italy, and Japan.)
- We continue to communicate with the District 02 Department of Health regarding questions and concerns raised by our community and team members. If the HCSD were to be made aware of a confirmed case of COVID-19, we would receive guidance from county health professionals regarding next steps to protect the health of all stakeholders.
- The HCSD has **updated guidance to schools regarding student field trips and school-related travel and work-related travel by employees.** (*Find this information and other updates on the district's webpage about COVID-19.*)
- The HCSD has an on-line plan in place should school from home become necessary. Teachers are reviewing school from home procedures with students just as we do when there is the possibility of inclement weather.

The HCSD is committed to working with our health partners and government agencies to monitor this situation and we will provide updates as often as necessary. This is an uncertain time and we thank our stakeholders in advance for working with us to keep all of our students and staff healthy and safe. Please go to the HCSD's coronavirus web page for guidance on how to keep families healthy. Additionally, please remember that any student or staff member who experiences flu-like symptoms cannot be at school. Individuals must be fever-free without the aid of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

Finally, the HCSD would like to extend its gratitude to the Gwinnett County Public School System for sharing its protocols, procedures, and communications regarding COVID-19. Working together with our colleagues enables us to put a strong plan in place to take care of **all** students, their families, team members, and the community at large.