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RE: Parent Letter Regarding novel coronavirus (CORVID-19)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you know, several presumptive cases of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus have been found in Oregon and these cases have had some contact with schools in the state. We understand that this news is worrisome to everyone and that extra attention is going to be paid to schools all over the state.

With these recent findings, and the possibility of additional cases occurring throughout the country, I wanted to take a moment to communicate what the Ontario School District is doing regarding preventive measures to maintain the health and safety of your child, as well as provide you with contact information for possible questions you may have.

Public health recommendations for COVID-19 are similar to everyday precautions taken during the regular flu season.

- We are emphasizing coughing and sneezing etiquette for students, and modeling that behavior. This includes avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- We are emphasizing and increasing the frequency of hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer.
- Custodians, as well as all staff, are intensifying efforts to sterilize our school environments even more regularly.
- We are encouraging our staff that has symptoms of any respiratory illness or sickness to remain home.

The district is closely monitoring this situation and will be in frequent contact with public health authorities. Our internal team is actively reviewing coronavirus developments and will continue to work with our local health department, as well as the Oregon Health Authority to determine when and if any additional measures, including decisions about additional cleaning, social distancing, and even school closures will need to be taken.

You can help yourself and your student(s) to reduce their risk of getting and spreading viral respiratory infections, including the flu and the common cold, by encouraging them to take these simple steps which will also prevent COVID-19:

- **WASH YOUR HANDS... OFTEN!** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Keep students home if they display any signs of illness, particularly those that include fever, cough, shortness of breath, and headache.
- Make sure your child's school has current contact information in case they need to contact you regarding your child.

There are also basic steps every household should take to prepare for any unexpected event and avoid:

- Public health officials advise parents to keep students home if they display any signs of illness. Health officials also support schools in sending home or keeping home students and staff members who appear unwell, consistent with the tri-county standard exclusion guidelines.
- Learn about your employer's sick leave and telecommuting policies.
- Establish a childcare plan in the event your kids need to stay home from school.
- Make sure you have the kinds of foods, drinks, medications and pet supplies you would want if you needed to stay home and limit your contact with other people for a couple weeks.

Additionally, if you have any questions regarding whether or not your child should stay home, you can direct those questions to the Malheur County Health Department, located at 1108 S.W. 4th Street, Ontario, OR (Phone: 541-889-8468).

Please know we are taking preventative measures to maintain the health and safety of both the students and employees in our classrooms. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's school or our district office.

Respectfully,

Nicole Albisu, Superintendent