



St. Catharine of Siena School
2330 Perkiomen Avenue
Reading, PA 19606
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Accredited by The Middle States Association on Elementary Schools

March 9, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Saint Catharine of Siena School is committed to creating and sustaining a comprehensive, coordinated effort to improve the overall health and safety of our students, educators and administrators. We are constantly evaluating our efforts to keep our students, faculty, and staff safe and healthy at school.

As you are aware, there are confirmed cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in Pennsylvania. The coronavirus is spread like the common flu virus and can be eliminated with good cleaning and good personal hygiene practices. We remind the children often at morning prayers and in classrooms to **wash, wash, wash** their hands to help keep everyone healthy. We have teachers wiping desks daily. Our cleaning company has been performing daily sanitations as well.

We encourage our students and families to help reduce the spread of any infections by:

- Practicing good personal hygiene
- Laundering clothing that has “caught” sneezes and coughs
- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoiding the touching of your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces
- Staying at home away from others if you are sick
- Covering mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throwing the tissue in the trash, **and then washing hands**
- Keeping students home from school if cold or flu-like symptoms (elevated temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath) present themselves

Specific to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), we continue to monitor the situation with information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health and confer regularly with the Diocesan Office of Education. I have attached several documents that may be helpful for you. Also, here is a link to the site from the CDC that provides information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>.

The safety of our children is a top priority at Saint Catharine of Siena School and we thank you for your support. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at mkraycik@scsreading.org or Mrs. Erin Miller, school nurse, at emiller@scsreading.org

Sincerely,
Mrs. Marcella Kraycik, Principal

Mrs. Erin Miller, SCS Nurse

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What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

These include

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- 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.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

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