



# Vernon Elementary School

P.O. Box 89 – 90 CRN 3139 – Vernon, AZ 85940 – ☎ (928) 537-5463 – Fax (928) 537-1820

[www.vernon.k12.az.us](http://www.vernon.k12.az.us)

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3/9/20

We understand that there is a lot of information circulating about the Novel Coronavirus, now known as COVID-19.

## **WHAT IS KNOWN**

- The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified and causes a respiratory illness ranging from a mild cold-like illness to severe pneumonia.
- Most (81%) of people diagnosed with COVID-19 in China had mild disease.
- Similar to influenza, the people who are most likely to have severe disease and complications from COVID-19 are older individuals (>60 years old) and those with other medical conditions like heart and lung disease or diabetes.
- There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19. • Currently, there is NO confirmed community spread of COVID-19 in the US, but experts predict there will eventually be community spread.

## **HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS**

- COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads – through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread of the virus might be possible before a person has symptoms; there have been reports of COVID-19, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

## **WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO NOW, PRIOR TO COMMUNITY SPREAD**

- Implement your annual seasonal influenza plan.
- Students and staff who are ill, especially with acute respiratory symptoms (not allergies or chronic conditions), should stay home.
- Review sick policies for staff; ensure staff can stay home when ill.
- Ensure prescribed cleaning is happening at school facilities (routine disinfectants are appropriate).
- Enhance cleaning of high touch surfaces like door knobs, toilet handles, and sink handles.
- Ensure that hand sanitizer, soap/paper towels and tissues are widely available in school facilities.
- Remind students to cover their coughs/sneezes with a tissue or their elbow.
- Plan for when community spread occurs (non-pharmaceutical interventions or NPIs)
- Ensure parents/guardians have a plan to designate a caregiver for a sick child(ren) if parents/guardians can't stay home.
- Look for opportunities to address food insecurity for families who rely on schools for breakfast and/or lunch.
- Identify at-home learning opportunities during student absences or school closures.
- The school will communicate updates to parents/guardians through letters, our website, and through our communication system, Blackboard Connect.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet-sp.pdf>

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-home>

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/emergency-preparedness/index.php#pandemic-flu-resources>

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/emergency-preparedness/index.php#pandemic-flu-home>

Sincerely,

Dr. Barajas