St. Mary's County Public Schools
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Dr. J. Scott Smith
Superintendent

March 3, 2020

St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) and St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD) understand the concerns many people have over the potential spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) to our area. Despite COVID-19 being detected in the United States, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting that risk to the general American public remains low at this time.

SMCPS and SMCHD are working closely with local, state, and federal agencies to monitor the situation. We maintain a coordinated and comprehensive public health plan to ensure we are prepared if cases arise in our community. SMCPS will be prepared to implement public health recommendations as required.

As a best practice for overall health in cold and influenza season, the CDC recommends that individuals receive the influenza vaccine and engage in every day, preventative measures to prevent the spread of germs and avoid illnesses (including COVID-19), such as:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Avoid touching eyes, mouth, and nose with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick. The CDC recommends that individuals remain home for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (i.e., chills, feeling warm, flushed appearance).
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately discard the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Take any anti-viral medication prescribed to you as instructed.
- Follow the CDC recommendations for using a facemask:
  - It is **not** recommended that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of illness and by health workers and other people who are taking care of someone who is ill
- If you are concerned about having COVID-19 because of your travel history or exposure to someone who has COVID-19, please make sure to **call ahead** to your health care provider before coming in for a medical evaluation.

Additional information is available at the St. Mary's County Health Department website at: www.smchd.org/coronavirus. COVID-19 testing and case counts in Maryland are updated on the Maryland Department of Health website.

J. Scott Smith, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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