



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 10, 2020

Superintendent's Message: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Dear parents, guardians and staff,

Thank you for your patience during this time of uncertainty. There is not currently a COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic in the United States. There are no known cases of COVID-19 affecting staff, students or parents, in our school district. We continue to participate in daily meetings and calls to best prepare for an outbreak and to support our community. We would like to remind you that the State of Emergency declared on March 4, 2020 by Governor Newsom was preparation-based, not because an outbreak currently exists. An emergency proclamation is designed to focus resources and expedite government response.

Please be aware that we are taking direction from primarily the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH). Decisions are also made in partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE).

We have activated our Emergency Operations Center and we have reviewed, updated, and are ready to implement our pandemic plan if needed. Part of our plan includes the ability to continue to offer our students an education remotely if schools need to close for an extended period of time. We are confident in our ability to do this if it becomes necessary. We will continue to review and analyze our options and will remain in close contact with LACOE and the California Department of Education (CDE) for further guidance if this option is needed.

Since the first case of coronavirus in Los Angeles County was reported at the end of January, our custodial team has increased sanitation efforts in all of our schools and throughout the district. Our team will continue spending additional time and increasing its frequency of cleaning and disinfecting, especially in regard to high-traffic areas and touchpoints.

The district has ordered classroom supplies including hand sanitizer and disinfectant, however, some items are on backorder. We do have some supplies on hand. Our school nurses have been trained and able to properly isolate a student or staff member if concern of this virus arises. We are working diligently to provide these products to assist with classroom cleanliness. We can't emphasize enough that hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds is the preferred method for students and staff and please keep sick students at home. Sick staff should also stay home.

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1651 Sixteenth Street • Santa Monica • California 90404-3891 • (310) 450-8338 • www.smmusd.org

Board of Education: Oscar de la Torre • Craig Foster • Jon Kean • Maria Leon-Vazquez

Laurie Lieberman • Ralph Mechur • Dr. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein

Superintendent: Dr. Ben Drati

In addition to these hygiene measures at schools and throughout the district, our transportation department has increased its cleaning protocols and will be wiping and disinfecting buses each school day. Our custodial and maintenance staff will also be provided with additional hygiene training with a focus on the coronavirus.

The LACDPH is stating that students and staff should stay home if they have:

- Productive moist cough (spewing respiratory droplets) – even without fever - should stay home.
- Fever over 100 degrees. Students / staff need to be fever and symptom-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication, before returning to school.

As always, SMMUSD will make every effort to assess for illness in a timely, efficient, and sensitive manner. We continue to remind parents to keep their children home if they are sick.

Before new students enroll in any of our schools, they are asked about travel. Any families that have recently traveled internationally must have been in the United States for 14 days and healthy before enrolling and entering our schools. These precautionary measures are in addition to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's travel restrictions and monitoring at airports, including the Los Angeles International Airport. As always, we will continue to be welcoming and inviting to any new students and families who join us in SMMUSD.

Please avoid stigma: Stigma hurts everyone by creating more fear or anger towards ordinary people instead of the disease that is causing the problem. We can fight stigma and help not hurt others by providing social support. We can communicate the facts that certain races or nationalities does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

Our top priority is the health and safety of our students and staff, and we take this responsibility very seriously. We are committed to updating our dedicated [coronavirus webpage](#) as new information becomes available. This website is also accessible through an alert in the photo slideshow on each school website.

If we all continue to work together and follow these important guidelines, we can help keep our students, staff, and community healthy. Please share this information with your family and caregivers. We truly value your partnership in this and greatly appreciate your support for all of our students, staff, and community. Please see our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) that includes information regarding events, absences, field trips and other concerns.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent