Dear Shawnee Heights Parents/Guardians:

We understand that parents are concerned about COVID-19 as it continues to spread throughout the nation. The safety and well-being of our students and staff is our top priority. We are depending on the guidance of public health professionals who are the experts in protecting the community during disease outbreaks in order to make rational decisions based on expert advice. As of today, March 12, 2020, public health officials have not recommended closure of any Kansas K-12 schools.

It is important to note there are high volumes of misinformation about COVID-19 circulating social media. A trusted and factual source is the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at http://www.kdheks.gov/. New information on COVID-19 is changing by the hour and we want to ensure you that we will be communicating with you on a regular basis through email and voice calls to give you the most up-to-date information from the local and state health departments.

As we come back from Spring Break we are asking anyone who has traveled outside the United States, on a cruise ship in the last 14 days, or to a high-risk area (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html) to contact your local health department. They will evaluate your situation and give you guidelines on whether or not you should self-quarantine.

- Shawnee County Health Department – 785-354-4011
- Douglas County Health Department – 785-843-0721

If you are directed to self-quarantine by your local health department, please notify your school office.

Our schools will work with any students who will need to self-quarantine as a result of COVID-19 to support their ongoing learning. Absences will not be counted against the student during this crisis. As we work together to navigate the uncertainty and anxiety that go along with this rapidly changing situation, we must also take personal responsibility for the decisions we make for ourselves and our families. That could mean staying home if you are sick and/or have current symptoms of COVID-19 which include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

What can you do? Be prepared if the health department decides to close our schools. Talk to your employer about sick leave and telework in case you need to stay home with your child. Consider planning for alternate childcare arrangements. If you feel your child has an underlying health condition that puts him/her at risk for serious health problems, please feel free to keep him/her at home. The next few weeks may show trying times for our school community and the state of Kansas, but we are confident we can work through this together.

In the event that we would have to close school, despite what news outlets have reported, KSDE (Kansas State Department of Education) has made it clear that the law still states that we will be required to complete 1,116 hours of instruction. This instruction will need to be completed before June 30, 2020.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your building principal.

Sincerely,

Tiffanie Kinsch
Communications Director
Shawnee Heights USD 450