

**RE: TRAVEL INFORMATION FOR THE SOUTHWEST SCHOOLS COMMUNITY**

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Southwest Schools is committed to the health and safety of our students and staff. The COVID-19 coronavirus is spreading quickly in many parts of the world and has a growing potential to disrupt international travel. With spring break just around the corner, we want to provide information to you from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) related to travel to countries where there is widespread community transmission of COVID-19.

As of today, March 5, 2020, the CDC has identified four countries for which it has issued a Level 3 Travel Health Notice. A Level 3 Travel Health Notice is one that recommends that travelers avoid all non-essential travel to the particular country. The four countries are China, Iran, South Korea, and Italy. A person who travels to or through those countries while a Level 3 Travel Health Notice is in effect is to stay home and monitor his or her health for 14 days after the person leaves that country. We encourage everyone in our community to go to the CDC's website for factual, up-to-date information regarding COVID-19. The following is guidance from the CDC to consider before traveling:

- See CDC traveler's health notices at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel> for up-to-date guidance and recommendations relating to travel to specific countries.
- See information for travelers visiting countries where there are confirmed cases of COVID-19 at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

Because this situation is changing rapidly, before you travel, we encourage you to check the website for the CDC to find updated guidance for your destinations as well as for those countries you may travel through on the way to your destinations. Level 3 Travel Health Notices may be posted for other countries at any time.

Should employees or students travel to or through any of the countries listed as a Level 3 Travel Health Notice, the District asks that you comply with the guidelines from the CDC. Employees and students should stay at home and monitor their health for 14 days after leaving the identified country. If there is no indication of illness by the end of the 14-day monitoring period, employees may return to work and students may return to campus.

Employees who travel to or through countries with a Level 3 Travel Health Notice must contact their supervisor to notify the supervisor which of the Level 3 Travel Health Notice countries the employee has traveled to or through and when the employee left the identified country. The supervisor will work with the employee to determine the 14-day monitoring period. The supervisor will be in periodic contact with the employee during the 14-day period. If the employee shows no sign of illness after the 14-day period, the employee will return to the job site. The 14-day monitoring period will be considered paid leave and will not count against the employee's accumulated leave time. If the employee develops signs of illness, the supervisor will consult with the employee regarding the use of accumulated leave.

Parents of students who travel to or through any of the countries identified with a Level 3 Travel Health Notice must contact the student's principal upon return to the United States so that the 14-day monitoring period can be determined. Student absences during this time will be excused. The campus will work with the student and parent to provide assignments and resources to help the student attempt to stay current with classroom instruction. The principal will be in periodic contact during the 14-day monitoring period. If the student shows no sign of illness, the student may return to the classroom at the completion of the 14-day monitoring period.

Region 4 Education Service Center has been in consultation with the Harris County Public Health (HCPH) about a variety of issues concerning COVID-19 and the operation of our public schools. The HCPH has advised that students and staff traveling to or through any of the countries with a Level 3 Travel Health Notice should comply with the recommendation to stay home and monitor their health for 14 days after leaving the identified country.

The four countries of China, Iran, South Korea and Italy are currently under a Level 3 Travel Health Notice. This situation is fluid and may change with very little notice in the coming weeks. We encourage you to access the information noted above from the CDC anytime you intend to travel outside of the United States in the near future while this public health emergency is in effect.

We will continue to receive information from public health authorities about COVID-19. Based on current information, basic health practices can protect against the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching one's eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

With the help of all of our families and our staff, we will work to keep our students healthy and safe.