

Dear District 161 Families-

As we continue to actively monitor COVID-19, we'd like to share information via the attached document about Board Policy 4:180 related to preparedness. Please know that we will continue to work closely with public health officials and follow their expert recommendations to best ensure the safety of everyone in our school community.

Sincerely,

Supt. Barb Rains, Ed.D.

As you know, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness, COVID-19, caused by a novel (new) coronavirus. The cases of COVID-19 continue to increase.

While we are not aware that any cases have been diagnosed in our school district or community, we wanted to share some information about our Board Policy 4:180 related to preparedness. This policy states that, should we be faced with the decision for an emergency school closing, that we would work directly with our local health department, emergency management agencies, and the Will County Regional Office of Education prior to making any decision of this nature that could disrupt our families.

Alongside this Board policy, please know that we currently are functioning at the “actively monitoring” level as detailed in the chart below.

Actively monitoring	Community spread cases	Confirmed cases among staff and/or students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More frequently clean common areas including door handles.• Additional hand sanitizers in all buildings.• Communicate precautions to avoid spreading COVID-19.• Communicate to families to keep sick children home.• Communicate to staff to stay home if sick.• Review pandemic plan and business continuation plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to monitor attendance and communicate with Will County Department of Public Health.• Ramp up cleaning efforts, potentially including the use of sanitizing misters and expand the cleaning less frequently used areas in addition to common areas.• Potentially limit large gatherings to only essential events or consider postponing essential events.• Communicate to families to keep sick children home.• Communicate to staff to stay home if sick.• Develop contingency plans and review business continuation plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potentially cancel all school events (athletic, fine arts, etc.) and all facility usage events in consultation with the Will County Department of Public Health.• Potentially close building(s) or the entire district in consultation with the Will County Department of Public Health.• Communicate to families the extent of closures, length, and schoolwork accommodations.• In the event of district closure, communicate to staff which staff members are to report to work to maintain services.• Perform a deep clean of all areas.

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The websites for the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) offer the latest guidance and information on COVID-19 and other health related issues. According to the CDC's most recent guidance, schools should continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community to minimize disruption to teaching and learning and protect students and staff from social stigma and discrimination.

Please know that we will continue our daily preventative measures as well as deep cleaning measures that make our schools safe for all students and staff members.