February 4, 2020

Dear Contra Costa Schools:

Many of us have heard about travel restrictions, quarantine orders and other measures now being taken to reduce the spread of novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in the United States.

Travelers entering the U.S. from China undergo extensive screening for 2019-nCoV at their port of entry. Recent returning travelers from China are considered to be at greater risk of exposure to 2019-nCoV and will be quarantined for 14 days, a period when symptoms would appear in someone who was infected. Travelers who arrived before February 3, 2020 are considered at lower risk and do not need to be excluded.

Should there be a suspected case of 2019-nCoV, public health and the local health care community will respond quickly and if warranted, isolate the suspected case at home, test for 2019-nCoV, and keep lab-confirmed cases at home until no longer contagious to others.

Due to the extensive public health measures already in place, Contra Costa Health Services does not recommend that schools exclude students, faculty, and their families from school if they returned from China before Feb. 3. This recommendation is consistent with guidance from the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

What schools should do is take actions to prevent the spread of colds and flu that are common at this time of year. This includes:

- Students and staff who are sick should stay home until well
- Frequently wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer
- Cover with an elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth and limit close contact with people who are sick

Local information about the virus is available at cchealth.org/coronavirus.

Sincerely,

Dan Peddycord, RN, MPA/HA
Public Health Director, Contra Costa Health Services