



Parent Prep for the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

By Educator Barnes – March 11, 2020

This week began with Avon Community Schools closing through March 20 because one student tested positive for the coronavirus and another has symptoms. Avon students will have e-learning days instead.

At a press conference held to provide updates about the Avon school closing, Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Jennifer McCormick said, "Nothing is perfect about these decisions, and there are challenges that come along with such difficult decisions. Those

challenges were on my husband's mind when he came home from work last night. He said, "What do we do if the boys' school closes?" I think this is the thought that is on every parent's mind. Unfortunately, Avon parents weren't able to make plans in advance. However, other parents can learn from this situation and take action now to avoid panic if they find out their children's school is closed for an extended amount of time.

Here are some points for consideration:

1. **Find childcare.**

Parents must make a plan for someone to watch their children. Avon schools are closed for several days. Parents might not have that much PTO or sick time to use for this situation. Use grandparents as a last resort. Older adults are more susceptible to viruses or illnesses. Parents should also check with before and aftercare. Today, the aftercare program my boys attend sent an email informing parents that if the school closes, the aftercare would also be closed. Now, we know our aftercare program would not be an option, and we can plan accordingly.

2. **Keep sick children at home.**

This should already be standard practice. Children should be kept home if they are sick. Children who wake up with a fever should not be sent to school even if they are given medicine. Children should be fever-free for at least 24 hours. Keeping sick children at home is a practice that should continue even when the coronavirus dies down.

3. **Make a plan for school work.**

Some school districts have made plans for e-learning days. Even if parents have internet, this could be problematic. Not every school district that plans to implement e-learning days have provided devices for students to use at home. Although some school districts are one-to-one with technology, not all school districts let students take the devices home. Having a device at home still might pose problems especially if there are more children at home with e-learning assignments than devices available to use at home. Other schools are having teachers create work packets that would be sent home in advance just in case school closes unexpectedly. Parents need to consider if they need to find time to take their children to the library to finish work or find time to help their children work through the packets sent home.

Right now, it is a wait and see situation in regards to whether another school district in Indiana will close. What parents can do is figure out some of these potential problems before

they occur. Children need stability and routines. The last thing children need is to see their parents stressed out because they did not plan ahead.