

Cancelation of School

Dear residents of Roberts and surrounding areas,

Each day this past week, I have drafted something to share on Covid-19 to the community, slept on it, and woke up to a major change in how I perceive and understand this new disease. This letter to the community is NOT to spread fear or panic, nor is it to undersell the reality of a global pandemic, but to let the community know Roberts Schools is taking this seriously and is hoping to put in a few measures of safety.

First of all, many have debated how deadly this new disease is and stated that the common flu kills more people every day. As discussed in the [link here \(hover over the blue to follow the link\)](#), as of March 13th, Covid-19 has a transmission rate of 1.7-3.7% and a mortality rate of 1.5-3.5%, and we are unsure how many people currently have this new disease as not everyone is tested. In comparison, the common flu has a transmission rate of approximately 1% and a mortality rate of 0.1%. This would suggest it is 2-4 times as contagious and significantly more severe. The counterpoint discussed from the same link above is the flu kills approximately 1,027 people a day while Covid-19 kills approximately 70 people per day, as the flu is significantly more common worldwide and thus many more cases exist.

In response to this, I have one comment: Both can be severe, and best practices for both are social distancing and hygiene practices. The CDC suggests for Covid-19, as seen by clicking [here](#):

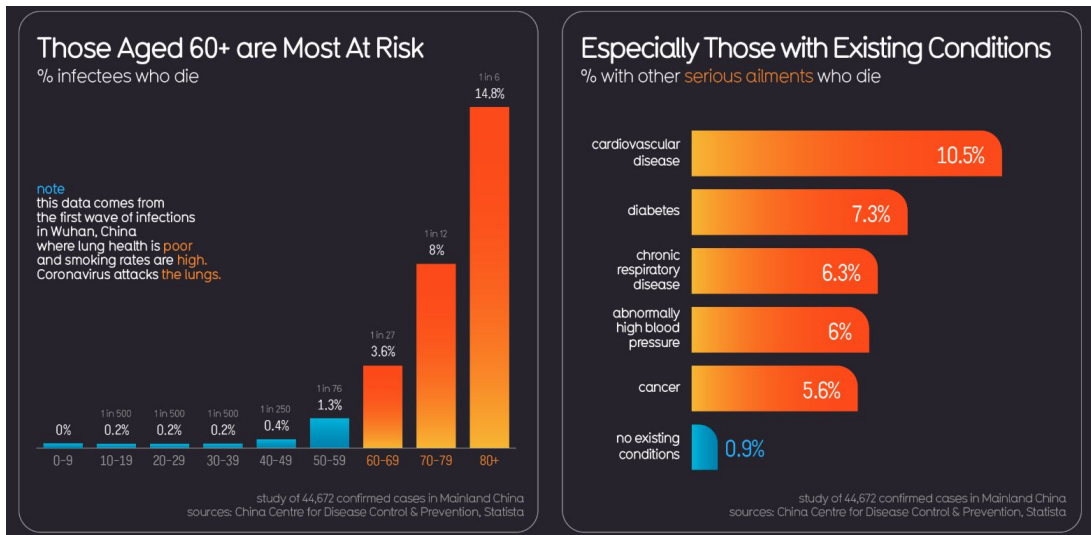
1. Clean your hands
2. Avoid close contact
3. Stay home if you are sick
4. Wear a facemask if you are sick
5. Clean and disinfect

The flu has very similar standards as seen by clicking [here](#):

1. Avoid close contact
2. Stay home if you are sick
3. Cover your mouth and nose
4. Clean your hands
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
6. Practice other good health habits

A key difference is Covid-19 can be contagious up to 14 days, and it has been shown to take 2-14 days for people to show symptoms of Covid-19. The Cleveland Clinic has some great Questions & Answers [at this link](#). This extended contagious period is why many schools have closed and many state and national events have been postponed and canceled.

Additionally, as a school, I have been asked, “Is it a risk for students?” The mortality rate shows a significant risk to individuals as they get older or if the individual who has a chronic disease. As seen in the table below, it is not a severe threat to school-age children, but they can become carriers and bring the disease to others.



UPDATE POST GOVERNORS PROCLAMATION

Read the proclamation below

- Currently, we plan to resume on March 30th, but this may change as we find out more information
- We are meeting as a school staff on Wednesday and Thursday to work on options for students to learn from home in the event of a continued quarantine period. The earliest we would be ready to start this program would be the 30th of March if the quarantine were to continue.
- We are preparing meals to be sent home for lunch tomorrow. We will be calling parents with a plan to place orders in the morning as well as discussing future needs. Meals will be delivered to home locations via bus services.
- We are limiting school access to essential personnel. Only staff and approved visitors will be allowed in the building.
- We will be giving the school a deep clean and disinfect all surfaces in the next two weeks.
- Please try not to congregate in large groups during this period of extended quarantine.

We thank you for your time and understanding. These are our children and this is a scary subject for many. We are doing everything in our power to maintain a healthy and safe climate for our staff and students. Thank you for your patience and remember as information evolves and changes, we will do our best to keep everyone up to date.

Thank you again for your time and understanding,

Alex Ator

Superintendent Roberts Schools

Governors Proclamation

HELENA - Governor Steve Bullock has ordered all schools in Montana to close for two weeks starting Monday, March 16. A full release from the Governor's Office is included below:

Governor Steve Bullock today announced a set of directives and guidance to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect vulnerable Montanans, including closing of public K-12 schools, social distancing measures, and limiting visitation at nursing home facilities.

“As governor, it is my top priority to protect the health and safety of Montanans, particularly our most vulnerable, at a time when we face the potential for extraordinary health risks from coronavirus in our state,” said Governor Bullock. “Social distancing is one of the most important primary protective measures to flatten the curve of this virus. I cannot underscore the seriousness of following these measures to help our neighbors, friends, and families.”

Governor Bullock directed Montana’s public K-12 schools to close starting tomorrow, March 16 until March 27. During this time, schools will engage in planning to provide arrangements to provide free meals to students who need them, pursuant to a waiver obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture, and to provide for all other matters and services that students need in the event of future or ongoing closure. Schools will continue to receive all state funding during this two-week closure.

The state will work with schools during this period to evaluate and consider next steps as needed. The decision to close schools is to slow the spread and is not in response to an outbreak in schools.

“I recognize that our schools often serve as a lifeline for families and that this decision is going to have disruption on Montanans over the coming weeks. I’m committed to working with schools, communities and public health to minimize the impact. I encourage businesses to do everything they can to support families as well,” said Governor Bullock.

To mitigate the impact of school closures on families, Governor Bullock encourages all employers to be generous with their employee sick and paid leave policies during this time.

Governor Bullock is strongly recommending that the public limits all gatherings, especially those more than 50 people, in every community across the state. Governor Bullock is also recommending that individuals over the age of 60 or who are immunocompromised or with chronic health conditions do not participate in gatherings of more than 20 people. He also recommends that parents should avoid, if possible, placing children for childcare with grandparents or individuals over the age of 60 or immunocompromised persons.

Visitation in Montana’s nursing homes is suspended except for certain compassionate care situations. People who meet the exception for visitation will undergo a screening to determine whether they have traveled in the last two weeks, are residing where community spread is occurring, or if they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

In addition to taking part in regular briefing calls with the country’s governors and the White House, Governor Bullock has consulted with doctors and other public health authorities and school leaders to develop efforts to prevent spread of COVID-19 in Montana.

The Governor's Directive implementing Executive Orders 2-2020 and 3-2020 and providing for measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus is attached.

Governor Bullock will host a press call tomorrow, Monday, March 16, to discuss further details on these directives and recommendations.