

March 11, 2020

Dear Families,

As you are likely aware, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and State of Illinois Public Health (IDPH) are continually alerting us as to the current status of COVID19 and the steps that should be taken moving forward. I want to share with you some of the steps our school is taking to prevent the spread of illness and plan for the possible spread of COVID19 in our community.

As the global situation is evolving, we will monitor new developments and continue to reevaluate our steps and actions daily. In the meantime, the most effective way to stay healthy and minimize the spread of infectious disease is to follow these basic health practices:

- Enforcing good hygiene, like washing hands thoroughly for a full 20 seconds and covering coughs and sneezes with your elbow, not hands.
- Asking all faculty and students who are feeling ill to stay home until they fully recover. As our current illness policy states, which is aligned with the recommendations of the Cook County Public Health Department, students and faculty should stay home for 24 hours (without Tylenol or Advil) after all major symptoms have disappeared. The wait time may increase if directed by the county health officials so please make sure you have childcare arrangements in place should we have to increase isolation times.
- Self-imposed quarantine of two weeks for anyone who has traveled to one of the high-risk areas or has been in contact with someone who has recently traveled to a high-risk area. See CDC travel information here: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

Please be assured that SWSM is following our entire standard cleaning and sanitation protocols, with daily treatment of all high-touch areas (light switches, door handles, faucet knobs, chair backs, etc.). We also emphasize good personal hygiene practices concerning hand washing and cough/sneeze procedures with the children and staff. We appreciate your full corporation in keeping your child at home if he shows any signs of illness.

Additionally, our community is prepared to alter our procedures and planning should the situation change, including (although unlikely) school closures. We will follow the CCHD and/or Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) recommendations regarding closure. We will communicate any changes when the time is appropriate.

It is important to remember that handling the spread of a serious contagion like COVID19 is primarily a task for public health agencies. Any directives from the World Health Organization, CDC or local governmental organizations should be followed.

In times like this, we are particularly grateful for the strength and togetherness of this community. While the news is concerning, please keep in mind that the best thing we can do is greatly increase our hand washing, bathing and personal hygiene. In the case of any illness, whether it be coronavirus or seasonal flu, the benefit of following the suggestions above regarding hygiene and staying home cannot be minimized and will absolutely help minimize the spread of these viruses.

We appreciate your diligent effort to keep everyone healthy and safe.

Kind regards,

Kathy Williams

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