



February 27, 2020

**Coronavirus (2019-nCoV):
Steps We Are Taking, Information on Travel Advisories, and Continued Illness
Prevention**

Dear BFS Community,

Currently, a number of students and adults are still suffering due to the effects of this current cold and flu season. While we know that this season comes every year, various community members have shared their concerns regarding the new Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). As you are likely aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC) gave a press conference updating the country on the current status of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and discussing possible options for what could happen if there is local person-to-person transmission of the novel coronavirus in the United States, including recommendations for school systems to consider.

At this time, it is important to know the facts rather than succumb to fear. Currently, there are no confirmed cases of novel coronavirus in New York City and the risk to New Yorkers remains low. Since finding out about the spread of the virus, we have been closely monitoring the CDC website along with New York State Department of Health's website for positive case updates. As the global situation evolves, the BFS Emergency Management Team is currently reviewing our existing protocols and preparing for a range of possible contingencies. Our highest priority is ensuring the health and safety of every member of our community. To that end, please know the following:

- In the event that the school must be closed for any period of time, we want to reassure you that we will provide a plan for continuous remote learning. In all eventualities, we are committed to providing you with clear, timely communications about this evolving situation going forward.
- We anticipate that many community members will travel over our two-week Spring Break, which begins on Friday, March 13. An increasing number of countries are being placed under travel advisories due to the coronavirus. Please stay informed of the [CDC's travel advisories](#), particularly because we cannot know the status of the outbreak three (or five) weeks in the future. Over Spring Break, we will continue to monitor the situation and will communicate with you if necessary.
- We are also considering the impact of the coronavirus on school activities such as area field studies and overnight trips. We have not made any decisions yet, and will communicate any changes when appropriate.

- Given the level of media attention to the coronavirus, some children may become anxious and have concerns about the virus and its transmission. Although published in late January, these [**tips for talking with children about the coronavirus**](#) may be helpful to you. Our school psychologists and counselors, Jane Davidson (PS), Rachel Maldonado (LS), Yelena Remus (MS) and Kamauru Johnson (US), are also available if you have any questions or concerns.

We need to emphasize that the flu is still a greater risk to community health at this time. Our facilities and maintenance colleagues continue working hard to help contain illnesses by cleaning our classrooms and common areas with disinfectant products.

It is important that we do our best to prevent of all respiratory viruses, including 2019-nCoV, by following guidelines below:

- Stay home when you are sick.** *Reasons to stay home:*
 - Fever of 100.4 F or higher
 - Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
 - Active signs of cold or flu (persistent cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, or fatigue).
 - You should not return to school until you are symptom free for 24 hours (*without the help of analgesics for fevers, e.g. Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen*).*
- Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after use and wash your hands. If a tissue is not available, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve, not your hand.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water** - especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Get a good night's sleep.** Lack of sleep can affect your immune system. You are more likely to catch a cold or get sick because your immune system can't fight it off.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects.** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, especially when someone is ill.
- Contact the BFS Health Office to report illness** or if you have any questions or concerns.

The links below provide important information on the 2019-nCoV virus and cold and flu prevention.

- [**CDC's dedicated 2019-nCoV website**](#)
- [**NYSDOH's dedicated 2019-nCoV website**](#)
- [**CDC travel advisories**](#)
- [**Flu Prevention Video**](#)

- [**CDC influenza \(flu\) resources**](#)

On a closing note, I have been mindful of the spike of negative attitudes and behaviors directed at Asian and Asian American people within our country and beyond. As a Quaker community that believes in being positive stewards in each other's experiences, it is important to continue to treat people with respect and compassion. Our children are watching, and they are counting on our modeling of positive behavior.

Thank you for taking the time and care to read this important communication. I will be in contact again as we learn any new information that has the potential to impact our community. All of us at BFS appreciate your continued support and partnership as we work together to keep our community safe and healthy.

In partnership and friendship,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Crissy Cáceres".

Crissy Cáceres
Head of School