



March 4, 2020

Dear BFS Community,

While our school continues to monitor the spread of the COVID-19 virus and its continuously shifting status, we are writing to provide you with an update on our current plans and in the event of a city-wide emergency.

Most critical to our decision making continues to be the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and patterns of decision making of other NYC schools. While there are no suspected cases here at Brooklyn Friends, we are aware that there are confirmed cases in NYC and over 100 nationally. As such, with a focus on ensuring the safety, health, and overall well-being of our community, I write to share these updates.

### **BFS COVID-19 Response Team**

I have convened a response team whose primary focus is as follows:

- 1) Development of plans for remote learning in the event of an extended emergency resulting in a school closure. (Details will be forthcoming from LS, MS, and US division heads about age-appropriate plans.) Important message regarding remote learning: While plans are still being developed, the expectation is that every student will have access to the Internet at home. If this presents a challenge for your family, please be in contact with your division head directly.
- 2) Creation of communications protocols for dissemination of information to families. Please note that [www.brooklynfriends.org/covid-19-resources](http://www.brooklynfriends.org/covid-19-resources) will be your home-base for school communications as well as a myriad of valuable outside resources. The school will only send out e-blasts when there is a time sensitive and/or critical communication.
- 3) Reinforcement plans of BFS health protocols, including regular hand washing, staying home when sick, being assessed by the nurse when presenting with illness at school, notifying families of contagious conditions.
- 4) Strengthening of cleaning protocols, including frequency, within the buildings. Particular attention is being paid to doorknobs, tabletops and other high contact surfaces and areas.

### **Immediate Shifts in Practices For Our Community**

- Rather than shaking hands, we are asking all to use fist bumps or elbows instead.

- We ask that rather than touch door handles, opening of doors occurs with closed fist or hip whenever possible.
- All community members should be washing hands multiple times a day and use hand-sanitizer regularly.

### **School-Sponsored Trips over Spring Break**

We have no school-scheduled trips over Spring Break, and as such, no changes need to be made.

### **Spring Break Personal Travel**

Currently, the Center for Disease Control recommends a self-quarantine of 14 days for anyone returning from high-risk countries with large outbreaks of coronavirus. The CDC is currently listing Italy, Iran, China, and South Korea with Level 3 warning travel advisories. Japan is currently listed as Alert Level 2. As a result, the recommendation is that all non-essential travel to these countries should be avoided. However, we know that these warnings may change in the coming days, and we cannot anticipate what they will be.

Thus, we are asking all families and colleagues traveling to CDC Level 2 or 3 countries, or who are knowingly exposed to Coronavirus, to observe a self-quarantine period at home before re-entering school. This would include any additional travel locations that may be added while we are away. Given the current dynamic nature of travel advisories, to check your intended destination before and after travel, you can access the [United States Department of State International Travel Guidelines](#). Anyone who has traveled to these locations and who experiences symptoms such as shortness of breath, fever, or coughing may not return to school until a physician authorizes them.

### **Speaking With Your Children**

We have put together a variety of resources aimed at aiding you in conversations with your children. They are all presented by age-level and can be found on our website. In addition, a pointed resource that is being widely shared around the country is this comic book, [Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus](#). Useful for younger children (and older), it is based on interviews from Tara Powell at the University of Illinois School of Social Work, Joy Osofsky at the LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans, and Krystal Lewis at the National Institute of Mental Health.

### **Holding One Another in the Light**

As a Quaker community, we have the unique ability to pause and center ourselves within our space of care and compassion. As such, while this is a time of raised anxiety and fear, I ask that we all remember to hold our community in the Light while also holding space for one another as we navigate the challenges of our present. To hold space means to acknowledge the diverse range of emotions and experiences that are real for each of us. It means allowing us to vulnerably engage

around our concerns. It also means that we reject any possibility of unfairly targeting someone due to their background or country of origin. This virus does not discriminate. It is capable of affecting us all, and as such, we are called to uphold our community's values.

If you have a specific question or concern, please reach out to our COVID-19 Response Team here and the appropriate person will be back to you shortly. The School will continue to provide you regular updates in the weeks ahead.

While this is a difficult time for us all, I am certain that our community's strength, collaborative spirit, and overall care will help us navigate this trying time.

In peace and partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Crissy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Crissy Cáceres  
Head of School