



Dear Winston families:

As we move well into March, there is clearly a question on everyone's minds: "What is going to happen with the coronavirus, and how will my child be impacted at school?" To a large extent, no one can state with certainty a response to this question. We at Winston, however, are taking prudent actions to prepare for all possibilities. Today's letter outlines these actions and to share what we are planning to do in light of the many scenarios that are possible.

This Thursday, March 12, students will be dismissed early: starting at 12:15pm for the primary and lower schools; and 12:30pm for the middle school students. Primary students will be dismissed according to the normal pick-up routine "down the hill." The purpose of this early dismissal for all will be to allow all staff the chance to meet in division teams to train and prepare for the possibility of a remote learning scenario in which school has to close for an extended length of time. **Please note that after school activities on Thursday, March 12th are cancelled.**

On Friday, which will be a normal school day, we will do a "test run" with students of these remote learning programs. We will engage the entire school community in a special "in school remote learning day" and will review with children the tools and programs that they will be using should we need to conduct school remotely.

In addition, we continue to clean and sanitize the buildings throughout the school day and during the evening hours. Throughout the school day, we are being persistent about wiping down major areas of common contact—such as handrails, doorknobs, table and desktops, lunch tables and chairs, and other common spaces. We are urging children to wash their hands regularly throughout the school day with soap and warm water and are making it easy for them to do so.

We are greeting each other with elbow and toe bumps and have suspended all evening use of the school buildings for major gatherings and events. From everything I have read, it is clear that these basic hygiene protocols are the first line of defense against the virus.

We continue to consult regularly with our school associations; the NJ Department of Health; and the CDC; among other sources of insight and wisdom for suggested further actions and procedures.

As a starting point, it is important to define some terms.

- If you are in direct contact with someone who has come down with the virus—or who is diagnosed with it shortly after—you would be considered in PRIMARY CONTACT.
- Anyone who came in contact with you would be considered a SECONDARY CONTACT.
- Anyone who came in contact with that person is considered a TERTIARY CONTACT.

Moving forward, our policy will be that if we learn at Winston that anyone who

is a primary contact has been in the school, we will close for 24 hours to do a deep disinfecting of the buildings—as was done recently at three independent schools in Manhattan. The person who is primary would be asked not to come to school until 14 days have elapsed from their contact with the person diagnosed with the virus.

If someone in the school has contact with someone who is primary and is therefore a secondary contact, we will ask them to refrain from coming to school until the person who is primary has been clear of symptoms for 14 days following their contact with the diagnosed person.

If someone is a tertiary contact and chooses to stay home (self-quarantines), we will not object and will in fact work with the family on a specific remote learning program. For employees, they will retain pay and benefits; for students, these will be excused absences.

Finally, we must address family travel (parents and students) to a country that the CDC classifies as “Level 2 or Level 3” (for example, Italy is level 3 and Japan is level 2). If your family travels to a level 2 or 3 country, then Winston would ask you not to send your child to school for 14 days from the date you returned to New Jersey. Likewise, if subsequent travel is to a country or location in the USA that is then designated as level 2 or level 3, we would ask you and your child to refrain from coming to school for 14 days from your return. This is referred to as “self-quarantining.”

We are mindful, too, that the nature of the virus and the abundance of uncertainties about its potential spread may be a source of anxiety for us all—particularly our children. The counseling team remains vigilant and readily available and accessible to help out and advise when needed. You are welcome to e-mail the “team” directly at: counselingteam@winstonschool.org with any questions or concerns.

In conclusion: as one of my colleagues from a Manhattan independent school noted: “We believe children are well served by maintaining their routines to the fullest extent as is safely possible, and while we have plans for every scenario, our hope is that we can proceed with school as usual.” I echo these comments vigorously and urge us all to proceed with caution and preparedness but to also maintain our sense of calm and normalcy alongside our firm resolve to transition, when necessary, into a remote learning program seamlessly and intelligently.

Sincerely,

Peter S. Lewis
Head of School