

March 11, 2020

Dear St. Anne's School of Annapolis Families,

Our administrative team has spent many hours this week monitoring the rapidly evolving Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. We want to make sure you're aware of developments as they relate to St. Anne's School. Please carefully review the following:

### **Planning for Virtual/Distance Teaching and Learning (VDTL)**

Faculty at all levels are actively preparing to continue teaching and learning in case of school closure. In my March 6 letter to you, I shared that **all classes are canceled for students on Friday, March 13**, and we will hold a professional development day. While we hope this is unnecessary, please know that we will be ready to continue curricular instruction in the Program for Young Children, Lower School, and Middle School. VDTL will likely take different forms depending on grade level and subject areas. Our professional day on Friday will focus on the development and use of asynchronous resources (lessons and projects in core learning areas provided to students each week) and synchronous opportunities (ways in which teachers can use the School's TEAM and Zoom video communication services). In the event of extended school closure, please look for a communication from me with details and steps for your child to engage with our VDTL Program.

### **Technology and Access at Home**

To engage with our VDTL Program, all students will need access to technology in the form of a lap top, tablet, computer, or other smart device as well as internet access. If you have any questions or concerns about your family's technology resources (e.g., computing devices or internet access) at home, please contact [Karl Adler](#) or [Jul Lee Martensson](#).

Teachers may include activities from ConnectEd ([connected.mcgraw-hill.com](http://connected.mcgraw-hill.com)), the online platform for Everyday Mathematics, and Seventh and Eighth Grade mathematics programs. Earlier in the year, teachers of Kindergarten-Eighth Grade students shared login information with either you or your child. If you need login information or a password reset, please email your child's teacher (or mathematics teacher) before Friday so they can reset the password.

### **Sending Books and Materials Home**

Lower School teachers and Middle School subject area teachers will tell students which books and materials to take home Thursday as a precautionary measure, should there be a school closure following spring break. Hopefully, we will see you on March 23, and all books and materials can return with students at that time.

### **Healthy Hygiene Practices**

Our faculty continue to review healthy hygiene practices with all students. We have hand sanitizer placed in classrooms, adult restrooms, and at the entrance of the Multi-Purpose Room. Teachers are regularly discussing handwashing techniques, practices to clean and disinfect touched objects and surfaces, and additional guidelines provided by the Maryland Department of Health. Again, please keep your child at home if they are feeling ill. Your child should not return to school until they are fever-free, without medication, for 24 hours. Thank you for supporting these practices at home!

### **Tips for Discussing Headlines with Your Children**

During our professional development day, we will continue to review ways to discuss with students potential worries related to the Coronavirus outbreak, and we'd like to share some tips with you, too:

- When discussing the situation with your child and other children, do so in a way that is informed and supportive and also accepts their feelings.
- Remember that this is the first time children have seen a viral outbreak affect so many communities around the world, and validate their worries. Acknowledge how it can be scary to see so much media coverage and that so much remains unknown. Continue to validate and empathize, "I understand why you would be worried!"



- Remind your child that the best way to stay healthy is to wash hands regularly, especially before eating, and to avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth, and ears.
- Answer questions about the virus with facts from accurate, reputable media sources. If you need this information, too, do some research together with your child so that they can see you checking reputable sources.
- Remind them that the adults in their lives are staying well-informed and constantly evaluating our safety precautions. We will not put them in harm's way!
- Keep your own anxiety in check. Children look to the adults in their lives to try to understand how "big of a deal" something is. The calmer you can be, the more they will be able to settle down and listen.
- If needed, help students to manage their in-the-moment anxiety with mindfulness strategies. Some strategies to consider:
  - A focus on breathing with square or triangle breathing: Breathe in for three seconds, hold for three seconds, breathe out for three seconds
  - Movement: Regular exercise and movement breaks can improve focus and reduce worry.

There are many resources available online about how to talk to children and reduce their anxiety. Here are just a few:

- **[How we can help kids increase their sense of control as the coronavirus approaches](#)** (Washington Post)
- **[Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus](#)** (NPR)
- **[How to Talk to Kids About Coronavirus: Keeping your own anxiety in check is key](#)**(New York Times)
- **[Talking to Teens and Tweens About Coronavirus](#)** (New York Times)
- **[Speaking Up Against Racism Around the New Coronavirus](#)** (Teaching Tolerance, part of the **[#UsvsHate Challenge](#)**)
- **[How to talk to children about difficult news](#)** (American Psychological Association)

### **Administrative Leadership Team's Ongoing Crisis Planning and Management Work**

The administrative team is meeting daily to address crisis planning and management around COVID-19. This team has reviewed several pandemic crisis response plans under development at fellow independent schools. St. Anne's School is developing an emergency plan designed to provide our community with the tools it needs to prepare for and cope with a potential outbreak of pandemic illness. Though there is no pandemic illness present in the United States at this time, it is important that we take steps now to protect our students, faculty, and staff. The plan is based on the most current information and will be revised as new information becomes available.

### **New Webpage**

We established a [webpage on our website to share up-to-date information](#) about our steps to support the health and well-being of our campus community, and we will post to this site any status updates. We ask all families to rely on this website as an ongoing resource.

### **AIMS Visit Postponed**

Finally, I wanted to let you know that I received notification from the AIMS office yesterday that our AIMS accreditation visit, scheduled to begin today, is postponed. Despite best intentions and planning to deliver a St. Anne's School AIMS accreditation visit this week, circumstances related to immediate needs for schools to plan and respond to the unfolding situation related to COVID-19 preclude a visit from the AIMS visiting committee at this time. AIMS, our Visiting Committee Chair, Jennifer Danish, and I will continue to monitor our respective educational landscapes during the weeks ahead in an effort to identify possible dates to reschedule the visit this spring.



I am grateful for your partnership, flexibility, and understanding as we strive to protect the health and well-being of our school community and remain focused on our educational mission.

Kind regards,  
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