Dear Northstar Families,

First, I’d like to thank you for your patience and for working so hard to follow the CDC’s guidelines for preventative measures to help prevent the spread of any illness/virus including flu and corornavirus (COVID-19).

As we continue to monitor local, state and federal updates and communicate with other local private schools related to coronavirus, we are developing a plan for the Northstar community.  We are preparing for various scenarios, but please remember, this plan is fluid and will be updated as information regarding the spread of the coronavirus is updated. We will of course keep you updated.

**Distance Learning** - As health concerns continue to evolve and so that our staff can adequately prepare for a potential school closure and develop alternative means of providing instruction, **Friday, March 20 will now be a student holiday and teacher workday**.  This preparation will include the creation of work packets for each student.  If needed, these packets will be sent home at a future date. We will provide separate communication when/if those are coming home.  Additionally, staff will prepare to provide information via digital means. Again, we will provide communication, when/if that is needed.

Continue to practice **preventive** measures as outlined by the CDC:

* Wash your hands often with soap AND water for at least 20 seconds (singing the ‘Happy Birthday’ song twice while you wash is a good estimate of washing for 20 seconds).  Wash your hands after sneezing or coughing and before preparing food and before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
* Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.
* Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.  A Northstar reminder, you should be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school.
* Avoid close contact (such as hugging, kissing, sharing cups, etc.) with people who are sick.

**Contact information** - Please login to Achieve, our parent portal, and verify that your contact information and emergency contact is correct.

**Student/staff illness at school** - Our school nurse will, as usual, screen the student/staff for symptoms.  Based on the results of that screening, she may need to contact you, and, if the student/staff presents with the symptoms of the coronavirus (fever, cough, shortness of breath), she is required to notify the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).  Given their guidance, the student/staff may need to seek medical attention. Guidance from VDH encourages individuals to call their health care facility *prior* to visiting as they may not have the ability to test for coronavirus.

Our custodial staff will follow CDC & VDH guidelines for cleaning our school buildings.

**Field trips, community instruction and other community outings** - For now, trips in the Greater Richmond area will continue as scheduled, however,  we may opt to limit or cancel these trips. We also understand if parents have concerns about their student participating in field trips.  Participation is always optional. If you would prefer your student not participate in a field trip, an appropriate educational alternative at school will be provided. For our Career Academy students, we will also use guidance from our community partners as we make decisions regarding community instruction.

**Travel abroad and Spring Break** - If you have any impending travel planned, it's important to become familiar with the [CDC's guidance and travel warnings](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html).  They recommend avoiding nonessential travel.  If you travel to a Level 3 country (China, Iran, Italy and South Korea), the CDC says:  "[You should] stay home for a period of 14 days from the time you left an area with widespread or ongoing community spread."  We ask that you follow this guidance from the CDC and VDH:

* Travel to a Level 3 country:  Please practice social distancing and stay home (ie. “self-quarantine”)
* Travel to a Level 2 country:  Please consider practicing social distancing only
* Travel to a domestic area where community transmission has been identified:  Please consider practicing social distancing.

Again, should you need additional resources, please use the following links:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

[Virginia Health Department](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/)

[World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

Thank you for your flexibility as we continue to prepare for and respond to this constantly evolving situation.  As always, I remain available for questions or concerns. Please feel free to email me at ctrent@northstaracadmey.net or call me at 804-747-1003 x 1003.