



SUFFIELD  
ACADEMY

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February 28, 2020

Dear Suffield Academy Families,

I wanted to reach out as we finalize plans for March break and focus on many items for the spring term. While we are having a strong academic year this is an unsettling time for all families, and we are actively working to prepare for the continued success of all Suffield students. As you know the news related to COVID-19 (coronavirus) is rapidly changing with increased confirmed cases and concern for future outbreaks in the United States. While there are no certainties about how this could impact our community we want to assure you this topic is at the forefront of our thinking and planning. Our most immediate focus has been on ensuring that all students have suitable plans for March break. Some students cannot return to their home countries because of travel restrictions and members of our community have been great about helping them with spring break options. These plans are in good order. As of now and following the guidance of the CDC and International SOS, our school-sponsored spring break travel programs will take place as planned. We will immediately contact participants and their families if this changes and cancellations are necessary. We are closely monitoring updates from the CDC, the U.S. State Department, and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Connecticut Department of Public Health continues to report that the risk of COVID-19 transmissions in our region remains low.

As we look toward the resumption of the academic year in late March it is important to note that the CDC has recently added and escalated certain country-specific travel advisories, and these advisories could influence the US government's restrictions on travel in the coming weeks. We are certainly hopeful all our students can return to campus for the spring term but are taking steps to ensure our educational program can continue if some cannot or a local outbreak occurs in Suffield. Our technology department is working on expanded remote learning capabilities. They will collaborate with academic departments over March break to further prepare. Over the past year, we consolidated Suffield's learning management systems (Schoology) and our electronic communication to Office 365. These systems enhance our ability to continue the educational program remotely should it become necessary. We are currently working on steps related to enhancing our ability to broadcast classes (most likely through the use of Microsoft Teams). During this final part of the winter term, we are emphasizing continued general personal care. This has been an unusually powerful flu season for Suffield and our region, and even after the March break it is more likely that community members with fever and/or respiratory symptoms will have the flu or some other common cold virus rather than COVID-19. We are reinforcing themes of good hygiene including frequent hand washing, using hand sanitizer that we have all around campus, and covering mouths or coughing into tissues.

We encourage families to refer to the advice, guidelines, and COVID-19 travel alerts provided by the Centers for Disease Control. Please check the CDC website which is updated regularly as new information is made available. As always, if your child becomes ill while away from school please delay their return to campus. Similarly, when students on campus show flu-like symptoms we ask that they return home to recover if this is geographically practical. We are expanding the number of available beds for students that may have flu-like symptoms and live very far from home or in countries on restricted travel lists. We certainly understand the anxiety and concern surrounding this virus and feel it here on campus as well. My essential messages are we are closely planning for various situations that could arise including needing to continue coursework remotely, expanding bed capacity for community members with flu symptoms, and delivering our food service program in non-traditional ways. We will continue to closely monitor this situation and send along further relevant updates over the break. We encourage you to direct any specific health-related questions to Director of Health Services Linda Kaplan ([lkaplan@suffieldacademy.org](mailto:lkaplan@suffieldacademy.org)), and as always, please reach out to me or any of my colleagues if we can be helpful. We send best wishes from Suffield.

Charles Cahn III  
Head of School