Dear Parents,

As you are probably aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued an alert that the COVID-19 (formerly 2019-nCOV or novel coronavirus) may spread among the United States population. Although as of this date there are 60 confirmed cases in the U.S., this is an emerging and dynamic situation that calls upon us to stay abreast of information and guidelines, to review best ways to safeguard our community, and to engage in preparedness planning.

We will continue to study the latest developments about this outbreak and will be closely monitoring and following guidelines provided by the CDC, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Virginia Department of Health. While we certainly understand that you may have concerns about your own child, the health and safety of all students are our highest priorities.

As a means of providing additional safeguards for students, we have increased our supply of hand sanitizers as well as disinfectant wipes, and these will be strategically placed around the school, including in each classroom, bathrooms, and high traffic areas.

We have also elected to adopt the CDC’s guidelines and are increasing the frequency with which our school buildings are being cleaned. Spring break provides an opportunity to thoroughly clean school buildings and to ensure that high transmission areas or points, such as doorknobs and tables, are wiped down with disinfectant agents. We are also working with our transportation provider, Tranquest, to adopt cleaning protocols for buses, which will have seats and handrails cleaned on a daily basis.

We ask you to partner with us at this important time. Please pay close attention to whether you or your child is exhibiting signs of any flu-like virus, including fever, frequent coughing, body aches, and difficulty breathing. If your child is exhibiting any of these symptoms while at school, he/she should immediately report to our school health clinic and nurses, Mrs. Torie Porter, Mrs. Betsy Looney, Mrs. Ann Konikoff, or Ms. Suzanne Lumpkin. Any student presenting in the health clinic with any of these symptoms and a body temperature of 99 degrees or greater will be sent home from school. Our school nurses and consulting physician are carefully monitoring this situation and are available to assist you.

As a general reminder, these individual practices can help prevent the spread of respiratory colds or viruses (including COVID-19):

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water and for a duration of at least 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitizer gel (dispensers are available throughout our campus) when soap and water are not available.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands or putting your fingers in your mouth.

• Clean and disinfect objects you frequently touch (e.g., laptops, keyboards, cell phones, earbuds, etc.).

• Avoid close contact with people exhibiting symptoms such as fever, persistent cough, and sneezing.

• Stay home if you exhibit such symptoms.

• If you have a fever greater than 99 degrees, please remain at home until fever-free for 24 hours (without medication).

• When coughing and/or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or cough or sneeze into the crook of the arm or elbow. Dispose of tissues in trash receptacles.

• Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.

Should you and your family travel over spring break, we wish you a safe and enjoyable journey, but also recommend doubling down on the above precautions when using mass transit or gathering in large public spaces. We would also request that, should you travel to a region that the U.S. State Department has assigned a Level 3 or Level 4 advisory status, you inform your child’s division director upon your return so that we know that history, should your child present flu-like symptoms in the coming weeks.

As this virus affects the broader world, we feel and share concern and sympathy. We will continue, of course, to observe and monitor this unpredictable situation and will communicate additional information as it becomes available. I have included below some links with additional information from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

As always, we remain grateful for you, for your wonderful children, for the trust you place in us—and the community we build together in partnership with you. Thank you for your support, cooperation, and trust at this challenging time, and my best wishes go out to you for a restful and happy spring break.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis G. Manning
Headmaster

Virginia Department of Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention