

March 12, 2020 CORONAVIRUS/PS1 UPDATE

Dear Parents,

We are in uncharted territory as a community and as a nation. The health and safety of all in our community continue to be paramount. The first concern, both locally and nationally, is to contain community spread. **Although we have no known cases of COVID-19 exposure within our community**, we have 220 students in PS1, 47 members of the staff and faculty, and 174 families; we seek to consider each of us in making the best decisions possible for our school.

We are sensitive to the varying needs of our families. Parents with young children often struggle if what they count on is suddenly pulled out from under them. School remained open during the fires last Fall and we received plaudits from many of our families for providing this valuable service to those who need it most.

As information about COVID-19 continues to evolve, our Task Force is paying close attention to recommendations specific to schools issued by the [California Department of Public Health](#) (CDPH) and the [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#) (LACDPH). **The question of whether to remain open or to close strikes to the heart of the balance between normalcy and risk, and there is no "right" answer.**

This is a changing landscape - the most telling reason we have for making our current decision is the uncertain availability of testing preventing us from having accurate information regarding community spread. We have reached the stage of: Better Safe Than Sorry.

Our campus will be temporarily closed to students and their parents beginning Monday, March 16 through Friday, March 27. We will have our regular school day and aftercare program tomorrow and students will gather their belongings to take home with them at the end of the school day tomorrow.

We did not make this decision lightly, but believe it is best for our immediate community and extended loved ones, and the right thing to do as a school and as an institution that plays a critical role in the fabric of our local community and beyond. Keeping schools open can result in infection among staff, administrators and teachers, and between families. We must practice a strict policy of social distancing, or the virus will continue to spread and affect our community adversely. Though there wasn't one clear path, it *is* clear that as individuals and institutions, we need to work together through this difficult situation.

We are in regular communication with our peer schools in order to understand the entire perspective on why these schools have chosen their course of action. Each school has its own particular circumstances that it needs to take into consideration – we are no different.

Thankfully, we are in a profession where children's learning can never be halted or suppressed. Our faculty and staff will be working together all day Monday and Tuesday to plan and implement continued virtual contact, distance learning, and ongoing

communication for and with you and our students. We will write to you again after Tuesday about these plans and activities. You will be able to contact faculty and administration via email during this two-week period.

We will be surveying you to determine your child care and technology needs for the two weeks that our campus will be closed to normal school activities and programs. If enough people do need child care, we will do our best to provide it. Please fill out and return the questionnaire you will be receiving.

Clearly, this is a fluid situation. We are scheduled to return to in-person learning on Monday, March 30, but much could change over these two weeks. We will send communications each Thursday, March 19 and 26, to update you on our thinking and plans. Circumstances, news events, and government responses change daily, as do suggestions and recommendations.

Please know that we are continuing to consult multiple times a day with medical and public health experts on the best path forward. This ongoing consultation, as well as the most current recommendations by L.A. County Department of Public Health and the CDC, inform our thinking every step of the way. Our actions are guided by our desire to minimize disruptions to the day-to-day student experience, while also keeping the health and well-being of our school community at the center of our decision making. Any decision to close campus or remain open is done in consultation with these resources as well as our own understanding of the PS1 Community. Our school's coronavirus task force will continue to meet regularly - we have also coordinated our planning with the Board of Directors.

Looking Ahead - Spring Break Travel Reminder:

Please be aware of all [travel advisories](#) from the U.S. State Department and regularly check the [CDC](#) for guidance. Following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's current recommendations, we ask all families, faculty, and staff traveling to CDC Level 2 or 3 countries, or who are knowingly exposed to COVID-19, to observe a 14-day self-quarantine period at home before re-entering school. Quarantine should begin the day after leaving one of these countries and families should also follow guidelines received from health officials.

Thank you, as always, for your partnership and understanding as we work together for the health and safety of everyone in our community.

Sincerely,

Joel Pelcyger

Head of School

SUMMARIZING -- Upcoming School Schedule:

- **Friday, 3/13 Normal school schedule**

- **Monday, 3/16 and Tuesday, 3/17 No Students on campus - faculty and staff planning - no child care**
- **Wednesday, 3/18 through Friday, 3/27 Look for another email with directions on remote learning plans and activities and availability of child care**

Meetings, events, and activities that bring outside visitors to school will be canceled through at least through March 27. Changes to School Calendar (upcoming **canceled events) include:**

- 3/13 Green Class Circle Time will go on as scheduled, however, students will perform to an empty MPR. The rest of the student body will watch the performance live from their classrooms while parents can access the live stream via this link (during and/or after the performance): <https://www.psone.org/pluralism/media-and-video>. The video can be viewed on any computer, chrome book, smartphone browser, or Apple iOS device.
- 3/13 Gala Coffee on the Green
- 3/13 Memoir Club
- 3/25 Parent Ed. Coffee with Genevieve
- 3/27 Gala Coffee on the Green
- 3/27 Grad Movie Night
- Citizen Sprout lunch delivery and Good Life Organics will be canceled for the two weeks, effective Monday, March 16.