

March 9, 2020

Williamsburg Charter Staff,

In response to the coronavirus outbreak in New York City, we ask that you take the following preventative measures to reduce the possibility of contamination on site.

Prevention

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hand. If you use a tissue, dispose of it right away.
- **Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly** with soap and warm water, including the backs of your hands and under your nails. Or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Do not touch your face, eyes or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean surfaces at home, work or school that you use often.
- Wipe down cell phones daily.
- Avoid large crowds whenever possible.
- Walk or bicycle instead of taking the subway or bus whenever possible.
- If you need to take the subway, and the subway is crowded, wait for a less crowded train.
- **Stay home when you are sick. Call your doctor and let them know your symptoms and travel history.**
- If you are healthy, the CDC does not recommend buying or using face masks. If you are infected, however, a mask can help prevent the spread of a virus.

If you believe you are exhibiting flu symptoms and/or if you believe you may have been exposed to the coronavirus, we ask that you notify myself, the Head of School, as soon as possible.

Absences on or after February 2, 2020 shall be **excusable and not charged** to either sick or annual leave banks when the absence is a result of the following:

1. A confirmed case of 2019-nCoV where the employee is under quarantine or isolation in accordance with a directive issued by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Health (DOHMH) or other state or federal health agency.
2. Where an employee is symptomatic and under investigation for 2019-nCoV infection and required to remain absent as directed by DOHMH or other state or federal health agency.

3. Where an employee has been in close contact, as per the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines (within 6 feet for a prolonged period of time) with an individual who has a laboratory confirmed case of 2019-nCoV and needs to undergo testing and/or self-monitoring requiring absence from work, as certified by their doctor, DOHMH or other state or federal health agency.
4. Where an employee has recently traveled outside of New York, specifically from mainland China or other countries/areas designated by the CDC requiring absence for self-monitoring.
5. Any other case where an employee has specifically been ordered to be quarantined by the DOHMH related to 2019-nCoV including any quarantines recognized by DOHMH from other public health agencies.

Staff in these categories will not have absences charged to their sick or annual leave banks for the duration of the period they need to be out per the guidelines of the applicable agency. Thereafter time will be charged to leave balances.

WCHS will consider additional circumstances as necessary. If you believe you need to work remotely due to a non above mentioned situation please contact Katie Manion, the Accountability and Development Manager at kmanion@thewcs.org. While the safety of the WCHS community is of paramount importance, we must remind you that this is a serious matter and any and all abuse of this protocol will be responded to in kind.

WCHS COVID-19 Response Plan

Please note that WCHS has been a leader in properly analyzing this situation, providing our guidance to other charters and school communities in the nation.

Attached to this letter is the WCHS COVID-19 Response Plan, which has been adopted by our Board of Trustees. This plan details our risk analysis evaluation tool as well as school response protocol for each risk level to the community: Low Risk (Level 1), Moderate Risk (Level 2), Medium Risk (Level 3), and High Risk (Level 4).

On Friday, March 6, 2020 WCHS was at Low Risk, Level 1; however, due to the increasing number of cases in New York City, the issuance of some travel advisories, and general increasing concern throughout the city, **we have increased our risk level to Moderate Risk, Level 2.**

Our contingency plan is in place. All regularly scheduled activities are allowed. However, field trips are suspended until further notice. And we have cancelled Student Led Conferences on March 12 and 13. We have increased our cleaning routine of the school throughout the day and at night, and we will be deep cleaning the school March 12-15. Even though there is no virus in our building, we have reviewed all of our cleaning products, and we have purchased cleaning products that disinfect and decontaminate the virus.

Further, we have begun preparations to engage in online learning if necessary (Level 4). Thank you for attending Google Classroom training to assist us in our preparations.

Student-Led Conferences (SLCs) and Building Closure on March 12 and March 13

Together, the Board and the Administration has made a decision out of an abundance of caution to cancel Student-Led Conferences (SLCs) on Thursday, March 12 and Friday, March 13.

The school facility will be closed to all nonessential facilities staff on March 12 and March 13. Since these were already scheduled non-instructional days, these days will NOT have to be made up. In addition, all field trips are cancelled this week as a precaution.

Student Expectations

Students are still expected to present PowerPoints prepared for SLCs to their parents or guardians from home on Thursday and Friday. Students have access to their SLC PowerPoint online in grade level Google Classrooms. For students who do not have computer or internet access, a printout of the SLC PowerPoint template will be provided. Students should have their parents complete the attached SLC Parent/Guardian Verification Form and return them to their Advisors as verification of their presentation.

Staff Expectations

Teachers and staff are expected to attend a mandatory staff meeting after school on Wednesday, March 11. More information regarding your deliverables for March 12 and 13 will be announced at this time. In brief, all staff will be expected to work remotely on March 12 and 13. This will allow us to properly vet our distance working arrangements and make adjustments should a longer building closure be deemed necessary.

We understand that this is a stressful time for the community. Our intention is not to incite fear, but to promote awareness and strive to provide as safe of an environment possible during this outbreak. Additional information will follow as needed. Again, feel free to visit www.thewcs.org/covid-19 to review our preparedness plans.

Please feel free to reach out to myself (lsamson@thewcs.org), our Head of Operations, Valerie Jacobson (vjacobson@thewcs.org), or our Accountability and Development Manager, Katie Manion (kmanion@thewcs.org), with any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you,

Lester Samson
Head of School