

WARDLAW + HARTRIDGE

Pioneering. Thinkers.

March 3, 2020

Dear Wardlaw+Hartridge Families,

As news surrounding the COVID-19 virus continues to emerge, it is easy to feel bewildered and anxious. The school continues to monitor these developments closely, including guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the National Association of Independent Schools, the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools, and local and state health authorities. As of this writing, there are no cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey and risk to our local population remains low. However, we have seen that circumstances involving this virus can change rapidly. As we move closer to Spring Break, we feel an update to our community about our efforts to safeguard the health of our school community is timely.

Travel

If you have plans to travel internationally during the coming weeks, W+H asks that you do the following:

- Consult the [CDC travel advisories](#) for the countries you will be visiting,.
- Consult the CDC again upon your return for updated information.
- Inform our school nurse, [Angela Farese](#), if your travel plans include countries classified by the CDC as Level 2 or Level 3.

W+H Travel Programs

Global Education Programs

We are carefully considering whether our Spanish Exchange program to Madrid will proceed as planned. As of now, we intend to proceed with our two service learning programs in Peru, scheduled for June. We are in close communication with World Leadership School, our partner organization for these trips. We believe strongly in the educational power of these programs and will not rush to make immediate decisions while we have time to examine risks carefully. As of now, there are no COVID-19 cases in Peru.

Additional W+H Domestic Travel

Our 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. and our local field trips are currently moving forward as planned. If conditions change that elevate risks for these programs, we will consider those on a case-by-case basis and inform those involved should our plans change.



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Campus

In response to the flu season and the emerging concerns about COVID-19, we have bolstered cleaning protocols to ensure that frequently touched surfaces around the school are cleaned with greater frequency and we have arranged to do a deep cleaning of the entire campus over spring break. We ask that all visitors to the school make use of the hand sanitizer that will be placed at the front desk. We are emphasizing proper hygiene to our students at all levels.

Health and Hygiene

In any year, each member of our community plays a role in maintaining a healthy campus. There are basic precautions all should take to prevent or slow the spread of illness, including frequent hand-washing, avoiding touching one's face, coughing or sneezing into one's elbow or a tissue, and staying home when sick (especially if fever is present). We all rely on each other to make the right choices to keep us healthy. If COVID-19 does emerge locally, we will all benefit from maintaining strong immune systems, and sending sick students to school undermines that for others.

Academics

The WHO and other agencies have spoken of a potential future need to ensure social distancing, including the possibility of school closures in some areas. We have in the recent past planned for this contingency over a small amount of time, for example in case of weather-related disruption, but we are now creating plans in case of more extended disruption. In such circumstances, students would need reliable internet access from home. If you anticipate this would be a problem for you, please contact our Director of Technology, [Marc Spivak](#).

Reducing Anxiety

For parents and students alike, limiting intake of media coverage about COVID-19 and relying on a few impeccable sources is a healthy choice. This [article](#) from Time magazine about how to talk to children about the virus is useful. You may wish also to share this [comic](#) from NPR.

As always, we appreciate the partnership with our families on behalf of our students. We keep in our thoughts those whose lives have been disrupted by this illness, whether residents of our country or those who reside in areas where the disease has become prevalent.

With best regards,



Andy Webster
Head of School