

## Coronavirus Message #3

Dear SRV Community,

The situation with the coronavirus and how schools are responding continues to change daily. The goal of this communication is to:

- Reiterate our prevention efforts
- Provide an update about the PAIS accreditation visit
- Explain how we are communicating with students
- Relay our plan for program continuity should the School need to close
- Set some guidelines for visitors to campus and large gatherings on campus
- Let you know the plan for our animal friends.

### **What We Know**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the coronavirus a pandemic and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure: fever, cough, shortness of breath. The CDC recommends that you call your doctor if you develop these symptoms or have been in close contact with a person known to have the coronavirus or have recently traveled from an area with [widespread or ongoing community spread of the coronavirus](#). I am asking that you also let the School know so that we can make a determination as to whether you or your child should be on campus. Based on what we know at this time and according to the Department of Public Health, our community has not had direct exposure to a positive case.

In order to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus and mitigate its impact we continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials and schools to help protect the whole school community and make plans to mitigate the virus and minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

### **What the School is Doing**

#### ***Sanitization***

We continue to emphasize basic, smart hygiene with our students. These practices include things like regular hand washing and appropriately covering our mouths and noses when we cough or sneeze. Our classrooms and common areas are cleaned and sanitized every day, with more frequent attention paid to high traffic areas like bathrooms, doorknobs, and handrails and another deep clean of classrooms will be done over the weekend.

#### ***PAIS Accreditation***

A visiting team from the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS) was scheduled to arrive for the School's accreditation visit on Sunday, March 15th. I spoke with PAIS yesterday and we decided to postpone the accreditation visit until the fall of 2020.

### ***Communicating Changes to Students***

Teachers will be communicating with students about what to expect in regard to the possibility of the School closing and about how they will stay connected to their teachers through Google Classroom. Such conversations will be developmentally appropriate, and may be limited in scope until we have more information. Decisions about what to share with younger children will be determined by emergent needs and questions posed by the students. We want to do this in a way that does not create anxiety or add to any apprehension that they might have, and we know that the lack of clarity about next steps can add needless confusion to the mix.

Ultimately, should it become necessary, we'd like learning from home to be a fun experience for them and so as we are building the platform, our mantra has been, "have fun with it." The CDC has some resources under the heading [Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) that provide messages for parents, school staff, and others working with children, that you might find useful.

### ***Program Continuity and Google Classroom***

As I wrote in my second communication, our primary goal in regard to program continuity is to maintain the strong sense of community and social bonds that students have with their teachers. I have been working with the SRV Administration and our technical support company, Tech Guides, to find the best platform for our purposes and have landed on Google Classroom. Google Classroom allows teachers to create online content that students and parents can access at their convenience and therefore doesn't require intensive scheduling. For an overview of the product, click on this link: [Google Classroom](#)

The staff was trained to use Google Classroom during yesterday's staff meeting. Tomorrow morning we will be setting up remote classrooms, preparing content, and testing the system internally. I would like to beta-test it with SRV families tomorrow as well by having the Google classrooms go "live" in the afternoon, after which parents can access their child's classroom.

### ***What Students and Families Can Do***

The way that Google Classroom will work is that the teachers in each learning group (e.g. Primary Circle, Youngest Group) will set up a classroom. Specials teachers (e.g. science, Spanish) will join each group in which they have students as an additional teacher in that group. Parents will receive an invitation to the class, which will give them access. Oldest Group students, who already have school

emails, will also be invited to join the class. You can watch this short video [Google Classroom Student Guide](#) to better understand how to navigate the platform and we are collecting additional resources for navigating Google Classrooms that we can share with you. Of course, some features, such as grading, won't be relevant. Most of the assignments, especially for younger students, will be instructions or videos made by teachers or found online that offer ideas for projects that students can do at home. Teachers may also read a book or do an activity and then record it and share with students. The older the student, the greater the expectation will be for submitting work to the teacher. All of this will be explained by teachers within each Google Classroom. You can expect that teachers in each learning group will post an assignment daily by 8:00 am and that the Specials teacher will post an assignment on the day that they are scheduled to meet with each particular group by 8:00 am. Details about which day each Special meets will be provided in their respective Google Classrooms.

You can access Google Classroom using the web on a computer with any browser. If you are accessing Google Classroom on your smartphone, you can download the Google Classroom app. **We recognize that all families may not have the tools or infrastructure at home to access Google Classroom.** Because of this, I have reserved Chromebooks for any student or parent that does not have his or her own device at home. Please let me know as soon as possible if you will need to borrow a Chromebook and I will have it ready for pick up in the office. We have a limited number of Chromebooks, so please only choose this option if you have no other option. I will be coordinating with Tech Guides, the School's IT support company, to respond to issues as they arise, so you can feel free to email me directly at [rod@theschoolinrosevalley.org](mailto:rod@theschoolinrosevalley.org) for tech help. I ask that after joining their child's class, parents email me with any issues that they encounter as a way to get out the "bugs." If any adjustments need to be made to the plan for online learning based on the beta-test, I will be sure to update you.

Tech Guides adjusted the platform setting so that parents can access Google Classroom without having a Gmail account. According to Tech Guides, Google already has many safeguards in place and because of Google's own safeguards, staying within the Google Suite will help to keep them safe. For example, any link that is going through Google servers would be protected and not susceptible to online viruses. We are working to ensure that all our students remain safe from online threats and so we are taking the following precautions:

- All the data that will be stored will be encrypted to better ensure cyber safety.
- Tech guides can change the passwords given to older students once we return to school should we decide to continue the use of the Google Classroom platform.

We also ordered 125 SRV tote bags to be filled and sent home with students so that students can have books and other materials for learning at home. Collecting your own materials such as paper, crayon, pencils, ... at home would help in this effort tremendously. Our hope is that we are able to send the bags home with students as early as Monday, March 16th.

## **What To Expect From Here**

### ***Visitors and Campus Gatherings***

We are strongly discouraging any nonessential meetings or events and asking that organizers should postpone the gathering or use remote technology whenever possible. As of now, we are still planning to host the Oldest Group Play, Spring Mini-Camp, Putter Day, the Bird Walk, open houses, the Spring Chorus Concert, and May Fair, but the situation is changing daily and so we may need to cancel or limit attendance to these events in the near future.

### ***Animals***

There are several animals that live on campus. Those who are in classrooms will be cared for at home by our staff and will be taken home very soon. If you would like to take care of a guinea pig, turtle, bird, or snake just let us know. Since the sheep and chickens live outside, one person will be designated to their care. The animals are also taking care of one another. I captured this photo of Dawn and Dusk today.



I am available to answer any questions that you may have and will continue to search for information about both the coronavirus and program continuity. I am grateful for all of you are doing and are being asked to do to prevent and mitigate

this pandemic. I am so very impressed by the creative ways that SRV teachers are guiding our students through this challenging time, such as making up songs about washing hands and crafting mini-books about the virus.

We are going to need to support one another through this difficult challenge and I am so grateful for the ways in which all of our community members have worked together to find solutions and offer help. We have the needs of our students at the center of our planning and are modeling compassion and understanding for all people. My quote for this message comes from Coretta Scott King who said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." I feel lucky to be part of a community that holds these ideas as valuable in its culture.

In Partnership,

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The School in Rose Valley