

Dear Prairie Hill Waldorf School Parents,

As the nation monitors the spread of the new coronavirus, COVID-19, Prairie Hill Waldorf School is focused on possible impacts on our students, faculty, and staff. **I want to update you on how we are responding to this outbreak and share with you our guiding principles for making decisions regarding the education and care of our students. I also want to inform you of updates to our policies and procedures, specifically as they relate to infection control and travel.**

As always, the health and well-being of Prairie Hill's community of students, families, faculty, and staff remain our highest priority. To ensure our sound and careful decision-making, we are monitoring global, national, and local health organizations, as well as consulting with local healthcare professionals. This includes following guidelines and recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO), the [US Department of State](#), and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) for school closure, travel plans, and quarantine.

We are also in close communication with the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America (AWSNA) as we work together to be proactive in our planning, and I will promptly share any recommended changes to our policies or protocols that result from that session.

As part of our internal conversations, as well as discussions with peer institutions, we are examining how a serious outbreak would affect teaching and learning, student travel, and community gatherings at Prairie Hill. We are also assessing options to ensure educational continuity for our students in the event of an extended school closing.

In response to the aforementioned resources, we will enhance our hygiene protocols with additional professional cleaning services to ensure that surfaces such as doors, door handles, faucets, desks, handrails, etc. are disinfected frequently. We will continue to evaluate any needs and adjust as necessary.

We would like to remind you of the [CDC's general recommendations](#) to help prevent the spread of any respiratory virus (like cold or flu and including COVID-19) and ask that you join us in reinforcing that students wash their hands many times each day at school and when they return home; sneeze or cough into a tissue and throw it away or sneeze into their elbows; do not share cups or water bottles; and keep children home until fever free for 24 hours without medication.

If you are traveling during spring break, please carefully check the [CDC Travel website](#) and the [State Department website](#) to ensure a safe experience for your family. We recognize that families may have travel plans for spring break that include international travel. As of this mailing, the State Department has issued a [travel guidance related to COVID-19](#) that includes a Warning Level 4 (do not travel) for China and Iran and Warning Level 3 (avoid all nonessential travel) for Italy and South Korea. For the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak, or until further notice, we ask for your cooperation with the following protocol:

**If you are traveling to an area where either the State Department or the CDC has issued an Alert Level**

**2, or Warning Level 3 or 4, or if you have been in contact with a traveler who has recently returned from these areas, please notify our Administrator, Jeanne Ring at [jring@prairiehillwaldorf.org](mailto:jring@prairiehillwaldorf.org)**

While it may be an unlikely scenario, Prairie Hill reserves the right to require a family member, student, or employee to remain away from school for up to 14 days from your date of contact. A physician's release may be required before returning to school. The link to the incubation period as determined by the CDC can be found [here](#).

Lastly, please remember that students take their emotional cues from adults. We encourage you to monitor your child's engagement in the topic and help them understand what they are seeing and hearing. You might find these articles helpful in talking to your child about the coronavirus outbreak:

[How to talk to children about difficult news](#)

[Explaining the News to Our Kids](#)

[How to Talk to Kids About the Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

[How to Talk to Kids About Coronavirus](#)

This is an evolving and complex situation, and we will continue to follow the latest CDC updates for guidance on the most effective and sensible prevention measures for schools. I will keep you posted of any new developments or changes to our protocols as this situation unfolds. In the meantime, I thank you in advance for your understanding and patience as we partner to protect the health and safety of all our students and employees.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

In Service,

Jeanne Ring  
Administrator  
Prairie Hill Waldorf School