



March 2, 2020

Dear Roycemore Families and Students,

I am writing to provide an update to my last communication to you (Jan. 29) regarding Roycemore's response to the coronavirus, now referred to as COVID-19. As we shared in that communication, we have continued to follow the precautionary and preventative measures recommended by the CDC. Roycemore monitors CDC information on the coronavirus on a daily basis. Since the time of my last communication, the [CDC](#) has provided the following risk assessment:

- For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.
- People in communities where ongoing community spread with the virus that causes COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated though still relatively low risk of exposure.
- Healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 also are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Travelers returning from affected [international locations](#) where community spread is occurring also are at elevated risk of exposure.

The [CDC](#) and the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) have prepared guidance regarding Coronavirus and are continually updating their sites. In addition, the CDC has developed [guidance to help in the risk assessment and management](#) of people with potential exposures to COVID-19.

While the immediate health risk is currently low, infections caused by COVID-19 have spread to at least 60 countries, including the United States. Roycemore will continue its practice to not endorse travel by students to locations outside of the United States where the [State Department has issued a level 3 or higher travel advisory due to COVID-19](#). With spring break coming up at the end of this month, we ask families to communicate any travel plans to Roycemore.

The senior administrative team met today to review guidance from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and we are in the process of developing further plans and procedures, including ways we might need to alter our school operations if spread of the disease necessitates such action. We will be sending an additional communication to the community by the end of this week to provide more detail on such preparations and plans. In the meantime, we offer the following:

- Talking to Young People About Coronavirus: With all of the news of the coronavirus, it can be an unsettling time for young people. We encourage you to talk with your children to help calm any fears they might have and to explain to them, in age-appropriate ways, about the virus. Here are several resources for you:
  - This [NPR comic](#) provides an explanation and some action steps that students can take.

- This [Healthline article](#), and this [article in Psychology Today](#) provide guidance for talking to children about the Coronavirus.
  
- Supporting our International Students: When we met with Upper School students in January to discuss and dispel the rumor that a student at Roycemore had Coronavirus, we addressed the importance of supporting each other through this difficult time. Some of our students at Roycemore are from China and other countries. They are brave to travel far away from home with the goal to obtain a premier high school education. They are far away from families and might be concerned for their well-being. Rather than letting fear cause us to engage in prejudice and racism, this is a time when we must support our international students more than ever before and recognize that it might be a stressful time for them. [This article in TIME magazine](#) addresses this topic more fully.
  
- Student Illness: As we reminded in our prior communications, students should not come to school sick. It is important that if your child exhibits symptoms of fever, chills, sore throat, coughing, runny nose, sneezing, fatigue, or muscle/body aches, the child be checked by a doctor and not return to school until it is certain that the child is not contagious. Keep your child at home until the symptoms are gone and they are without a fever (<100.0) for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol/Motrin/Advil. There has been both Influenza A and B strains at school the last couple of weeks and parents of students in those divisions where the students are enrolled were notified. It is very important that students stay home when sick.

An additional communication will be sent to you by the end of this week regarding further plans and preparations. In the meantime, if you have questions or concerns, feel free to address them to me at [afinleyodell@roycemoreschool.org](mailto:afinleyodell@roycemoreschool.org).

With Appreciation for the partnership in support of your children,

Adrienne Finley Odell, Head of School