



February 29, 2020

Dear Nobles Parents, Guardians and Students,

As concerns about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continue to escalate domestically and globally, I want to update you on what we are doing at Nobles in response to current risks and to prepare for potential changes in the outbreak; our planning for the possibility of a school closure; our evaluation of our upcoming trips over spring break; and our health recommendations to best protect yourself from illness.

### **Coronavirus Response Task Force**

After winter break, we assembled a Coronavirus Response Task Force at Nobles. I wanted to ensure we established a team to monitor the situation as it evolves, which would also be in place to respond swiftly to any sudden changes needing action or decisions. Over the last several weeks, the task force has been carefully following recommendations and updates from multiple health organizations and agencies, including the

[Centers for Disease Control](#), the [World Health Organization](#) and International SOS. We are also a part of several national and global associations that keep us abreast of what other schools are doing and what our partners around the world are experiencing and advising.

### **Potential School Closure**

Recognizing the small possibility this outbreak leads us at some point to need to close school for a period of time, we want to be prepared and ready to take necessary steps if faced with that decision. Nobles' academic leaders are working on a series of plans to support distance learning and to allow for the continuation of classes even if campus is closed. We have a range of digital platforms and resources to support teachers in moving instruction and assessments online. We also receive a great deal of support from one of our school partners, Global Online Academy (GOA), who provide a deep bank of resources for our faculty around online instruction and learning.

We will continue to work on our plans to best support our faculty, students, and academic program in the unlikely event our daily schedule is impacted by this virus outbreak.

### **Travel**

We have been carefully evaluating our EXCEL, athletics, and Middle School trips scheduled to travel domestically and internationally in March. We have been using our extensive network of information and counsel, assessing each trip's safety, and looking more broadly at our overall travel program this spring. I anticipate we will make a decision about the status of our March trips early next week and will communicate directly with those families involved.

If your family will be traveling out of the country over March break, please adhere to the safety guidelines shared by the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization. As always, please also share with our nurses any health-related issues that arise from your travel that might pose a risk to your child or the Nobles community.

## Health Recommendations

While concern about coronavirus has spiked in recent days, Massachusetts residents are still significantly more likely to contract influenza A or B, which have had notably higher infection rates this winter than coronavirus. All of these viruses are best prevented with standard health precautions. These include:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or, if unable to wash, using alcohol-based (at least 60%) hand sanitizers.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Covering your coughs or sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve (not with your hands).
- Staying away from people who are sick and staying home when you are sick.

Our school nurses, who are part of our response task force, are working to educate our students through regular communication and reminders about best practices in staying healthy this winter. One of the ways you can best help us keep Nobles healthy is to keep your children home if they have a fever. They should be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

We are all concerned by the way this outbreak has been evolving, and by the uncertainties that we are not able to fully anticipate or control. We remain very hopeful that the spread of the coronavirus plateaus and dissipates soon.

Please know how intently we are monitoring the situation, how committed we are to providing for the safety and wellbeing of our Nobles students and how focused we are on ensuring we are prepared for any changes that emerge.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Hall". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Catherine J. Hall, Ph.D.  
Head of School