



Distance Learning Begins Friday, March 20, 2020

Update #3, March 14, 2020

Good morning Eagles,

Yesterday afternoon Shawnee County Health Department ordered all schools in Shawnee County suspend classroom and extracurricular activities for two weeks, beginning on March 16, 2020, due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

We've spent the last few weeks preparing for this scenario and we are sharing our plans with you today, as we all come together in support of students' learning during these unique circumstances.

But first, a quick recap:

- On Jan 15, we internally communicated flu season best practices.
- On March 2, we increased illness prevention efforts on campus.
- On March 6, we extended the Exclusion Policy from 24 to 48-hours.
- On March 12, Governor Laura Kelly declared a state of emergency.
- On March 13, Shawnee County Health Department ordered schools close for two weeks, March 16-27, 2020.
- On March 13, President Trump issued a federal emergency declaration.

The health and safety of our students is our top priority. While closing school comes with its own challenges, we consider this an opportunity to model responsible citizenship to our students. After all, responsible citizenship is part of our mission statement – along with a commitment to academic excellence.

Distance Learning Begins March 20, 2020

To fulfill our commitment to academic excellence during this time, Topeka Collegiate will transition to a distance learning model. We're extending Spring Break through Thursday, March 19, 2020 to give teachers and staff time to design lesson plans that students can do at home. Distance learning will begin on Friday, March 20, 2020 and continue through March 27, 2020.

Students will not be expected to sit at their computers from 8:15-3:30 PM each day, but they will be asked to participate in online learning experiences with a schedule that maintains key aspects of their daily schedule. Each teacher will design instruction for their students' grade level and abilities. Younger students' parents may be helping them participate in online story time and guiding them through provided exercises. Older students may be participating in video meetings, online chats, and independent study.

We've always had an engaged and involved parent community. Prioritizing education is likely one of the reasons you chose an independent school for your child. However, we understand that Distance Learning requires your increased involvement. We want to thank you in advance. This is a community effort and we couldn't do it without you.

Please know that we are here for you. Teachers and staff will be available throughout the day, just as they would on a regular school day. Let us know how we can support you during this challenging time – we'll do what we can to ensure every student continues learning over the next two weeks. Equally, we ask for your patience as we transition to this new teaching model.

Upcoming Dates

- **Monday, March 16, 2020:** We will send additional information to help you prepare for Distance Learning.
- **Wednesday, March 18, 2020:** If your child is in lower school, classroom teachers will provide you with instructions to allow time for questions and discussion of any concerns. If your child is in middle school, you'll receive a comprehensive schedule update from school administration.
- **Thursday, March 19, 2020:** The school will be open from 7:30-9:30 A.M. for parents to pick-up Chromebooks, worksheets, or any specific materials teachers prepare for distance learning. Please limit the amount of time you are on campus. This time is for distance learning preparation only.

Returning to Campus on March 30, 2020

We are tentatively planning for students to return to campus on March 30, 2020.

It is possible, however, that the school closures will be extended by the Shawnee County Health Department, based on the spread of COVID-19. For this reason, we ask that you consider your own contingency plans. Talk to your employer about sick leave and telework opportunities. Consider alternative childcare. Practice social distancing whenever possible. Perhaps most importantly, we also ask that you join us in implementing the following illness preventions strategies, as recommended by the health department:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands;

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Stay home when you are sick;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash; and
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Finally, if you or someone you know feels sick or is experiencing mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, please avoid contact with others and call ahead before going to the doctor's office or emergency room.

As I said yesterday, we're committed to maintaining a strong sense of community as we navigate this challenge together. If you have questions, feedback, ideas or concerns – please let me know by emailing me at lrantz@topekacollegiate.org or by emailing our Director of Communications and Admissions, Brittany Crabtree, at bcrabtree@topekacollegiate.org.

Thanks again,
Dr. Lyn Rantz
