

To All Harker Parents,

We would like to offer an update regarding the Coronavirus outbreak and the school's continuing response. We continue to be aware that many families are following this situation closely, given the significant number of families at Harker who regularly go to China for business and to visit family.

On January 27 the United States Center for Disease control (CDC) issued an updated Level 3 Travel Health notice, recommending that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to all of China. But to also quote the CDC, "For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus, the immediate health risk from 2019-nCoV (Coronavirus) is considered low." The State Department has also issued a Level 3 alert which states that persons should reconsider travel to China. As of this writing the United States has not issued a travel ban though certain airlines and other travel organizations are beginning to suspend service between China and the United States.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is calling this an outbreak of international concern, but that comes with no recommendations that go any further than the CDC.

Currently, if travel to China is required, the CDC still only recommends a quarantine of individuals who develop symptoms of the Coronavirus. Some Silicon Valley companies have reconciled this quarantine by having their employees work from home during a 14-day period after return from China.

We will continue to implement policy that protects our community but limits our need to police our Harker families. This continues to be:

- As recommended by the CDC, please avoid any nonessential travel to China.
- If travel to China is required, or you have just returned we ask that you voluntarily quarantine yourself for 14 days. This may mean staying away from your children, so the children may continue to attend school without interruption. The benefits of self-quarantining were reinforced in today's announcement regarding the actions of a resident of Santa Clara County who has tested positive for the virus; health officials note that his decision to isolate himself at home minimized exposure to others and enhanced their ability to respond.

With the February break at hand, however, we will add:

- Any student who travels to mainland China during the break will be asked to remain home from school until 14 days following their return to ensure they have outlasted the known incubation period of the coronavirus. We will work with any student in this situation to assist them to maintain contact with their teachers and studies through the period of home quarantine. These absences will be excused, and teachers will work with students, as needed, to reduce or extend deadlines as appropriate.

At Harker, we often remind the students that they form a community and they need to take care of themselves and each other. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) has developed principles of good behavior around public health emergencies. They reference two key points with which we wholeheartedly agree:

- Avoid ostracizing members of the community who come from or travel to areas affected by the emergency. Our quarantine is intended only in the spirit of safety and does not imply any attempt to judge the actions of anyone who has connections to or has traveled to or from mainland China since the outbreak was recognized.

- We also will not tolerate behavioral discrimination toward students or families who have traveled to China and are following our guidelines as outlined, voluntary or otherwise, and will address this directly with any student or family who violates this principle. January was Kindness Month at the lower school, and that is an attitude that should prevail throughout our lives daily.

We will continue to monitor all recommendations from WHO, CDC and state and local health departments.

We will continue to instruct and reinforce with the students at all grade levels the importance of frequent hand washing. With this we couple the advice that hand washing only works until you touch something. It's very important to keep hands away from the face to avoid giving the germs a free ride to the upper respiratory tract by touching the eyes, nose and mouth.

We will also begin to implement levels of classroom cleaning protocols which were developed and enacted in previous health emergencies.

We remind you never to mask a fever with Advil or Tylenol and send a sick child to school. The child will not do well academically and could make many other students sick. We do strictly enforce our policy of requiring children with a fever to stay home until fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicine.

There are multiple persons at the school, including Debra Nott, our director of health services, and Greg Lawson, assistant head of student affairs who are monitoring the developments regarding coronavirus throughout each day. While the emails sent by some of you forwarding information about the outbreak have been intended to be helpful, at this point they are redundant and overwhelming to those charged with maintaining the health of our community and contributing to the ongoing evolution of protocols designed with the safety of the community in mind.

Of course, pertinent questions and feedback are welcomed, but please be judicious with any emails that are not directly connected to health situations within your own family. Thank you for your trust and support as we address this ongoing issue.

Sincerely,

Brian Yager

Head of School