



## A Message from the Head of School

March 12, 2020

Dear Parents,

I want to continue to keep you updated on both our plans and the rationale behind our decision-making as it relates to the Covid 19 situation. Our dedicated webpage is now operational and will provide up-to-date information as well as links to recommended websites for those interested in further details about the Covid 19 virus and what the medical communities believe is useful knowledge. The page is located at the front of the ACS website.

Once again I recognize that while our rationale for decision-making will not change, our specific plans and responses are quite fluid, and what I write now could actually be different in an hour or a day or a week. Some of what follows was shared in previous communications, but still it is important to repeat and repeat, especially as schools across the country and in our local district are making their own decisions to postpone, suspend, or cancel many school related activities, and some obviously have closed their doors completely. With this mind, ACS will:

1. Be guided, first and foremost, by the recommendations from the DuPage County Health Department and the CDC. The rationale is straightforward. The School and I cannot (and you do not want us to) make decisions that appear capricious or arbitrary. While there is always a modicum of subjectivity when making decisions, my job is to use criteria based on science and the best minds of our health professionals. We will not make decisions based on what other schools are doing, even if that school resides in Downers Grove or Hinsdale. We will make decisions based on what is recommended to us specifically by DuPage County if a situation arises within our school community.
2. Not be cancelling any specific ACS events at this time. The rationale is based on the needs of our specific community. Without a recommendation to do so from the health community, cancelling all events would be very disruptive to many of our families, could possibly cause undue and uninformed panic, and would not be in the best interests of our students. It would be deemed capricious and arbitrary. Related to this is the concept of “social distancing” which refers to specific distances between people (six feet) but also has turned into “stay away from large crowds, sporting events” etc. While of course some forms of social distancing make sense and are effective, the challenge lies in that there is no agreed upon definition of what constitutes a “large crowd” or group. The DuPage County Health Department today gave their definition as groups of **250 people or more. For ACS today, this means we will be adjusting our weekly Gathering attendance and carefully reviewing our scheduled field trips and other school-related, off-site events, but no other events at this time.** While there are some who favor blanket proactive, preventative actions, such as closing school before/after spring break, cancelling everything, or closing for the remainder of the year, as many colleges and universities are now doing, ACS will do so only as recommended by The DuPage County Health Department.
3. Expect that all families will be aware of and adhere to the specific guidelines and requirements of the federal government as it relates to quarantines or self- quarantines in terms of travel and monitoring families. More information is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> We expect families to

self-report to our school nurse and to follow all protocol recommendations applicable to their travel domestically or internationally.

4. Continue to work closely with faculty to prepare for potential online. Teachers continue to work on their curriculum as it relates to online learning with support and guidance from our IT team. **If there are any households in Groups K-4 that do not have access to a device (computer, tablet, laptop) with Internet access**, please let IT Director Steven Bosco know immediately, as we have the ability to provide some tablets if necessary. **All families should have scanning and printing capability.** Should we have to move to online classes, you will hear directly from me, as well as from your homeroom and “specials” teachers in EC-4 and from individual teachers in Groups 5-8. We know there may be a few bumps in the process with some trial and error moments, and the first couple of days will most likely be the most difficult ones. But the great enthusiasm and good-will within both the teacher and student bodies will make this experience a positive one. Patience on all sides will be called for!

Some parents have asked what would happen if they choose to keep their child out of school for an extended period, even if ACS remains open. We certainly respect and understand the personal nature of such a family decision, as we all agree this is a very challenging and scary time. If the absence is one of a few days, or a couple weeks, and not months, we will not penalize the student or family. Students will still be promoted to the next group level. However, I cannot simply state that school has become *optional*. Students in this situation will still be given an *unexcused absence*, and it will be the responsibility of the student, and not the teacher, to ensure that all the work is completed. If we move to online learning, *attendance will be taken by teachers*, and we expect that students and parents will do their best to create a “schoolwork” atmosphere somewhere in their homes, so that students will be positioned to make the most out of this educational model.

Please know I will continue to communicate on a regular basis. Many times “not knowing what’s happening” causes anxiety and fear, so our communications will err on the side of too many emails and too many posts! As always, please reach out directly if I can help you or your family in any way.

Sincerely,

**Paul Druzinsky**  
**Head of School**