



Wheeler's COVID-19 Update March 6

1 message

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Reply-To: wheelercommunications@wheelerschool.org

To: "Laurie P. Flynn" <LaurieFlynn@wheelerschool.org>



March 6, 2020

Dear Wheeler Community,

I'm writing with a few updates on our management of unfolding information with regard to COVID-19. I have been meeting with our Core Response Team and other Providence Heads of School regularly, as well as our Safety and Security Team. We are also participating on calls with the RI Department of Health and RI Department of Education every few days as appropriate.

Important: Past and Spring Break Travel

Thank you to those who filled out our travel survey already; **we strongly encourage you to fill out the survey** if you have not yet done so. It's important that we know where you may have traveled, or where you are planning to travel so that we can work together regarding your safe return to our campus (see below). Our faculty and staff are also filling out this survey should they have travel plans. If your plans have changed, please complete the form a second time with the new information.

Information about Returning to Wheeler After Spring Break Travel

To slow the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) into the United States, the CDC is working with state and local public health partners to implement after-travel health precautions. Depending on your travel history, Wheeler students and faculty/staff will be asked to stay home for a period of 14 days from the time you left an area with widespread or ongoing community spread as noted by a Level 3 Travel Health Notice. [You can read this latest CDC notice here.](#)

With this CDC notice in mind, Wheeler is urging its community members to consider the following before a return to campus:

- *Have I traveled to or from a destination to which the CDC has assigned an elevated risk?*
- *Have I been in close contact with anyone who has recently traveled to or from a destination to which the CDC has assigned an elevated risk?*
- *Am I, or someone in my household, exhibiting symptoms—such as fever, shortness of*

*breath, and/or coughing—that could indicate infection and **have not yet seen a medical professional?***

If the answer to any of these is YES, we ask you to observe a 14-day self-quarantine period at home—commencing the day after departure from the Level 3 or 2 country—before re-entering Wheeler. Individuals should carefully follow health officials' policies and procedures, and call their doctors if they have further questions.

We understand this is a strict precaution, but we also know you will understand that we are part of a larger effort to keep us all healthy and to help officials slow the spread of this illness.

Education and Information

Over this week, we have been showing videos to students during class and at assemblies that provide clear, scientific facts about COVID-19, as well as regarding best practice for thorough handwashing. Any student who feels anxious is encouraged to visit our Health Center whenever they wish. [Get the facts on coronavirus.](#)

Wheeler Global Trips

We have alerted families whose children were enrolled in the global trips to Sintra, Portugal, and Paris, France, that those trips will be postponed. While disappointing to all of us after so much planning and excitement about these offerings, we know that the risks to those students and our community may be too great. We are working with those families on alternatives, which the trip operators were flexible enough to be able to grant.

Finally, I want to underscore an important note that was reiterated on our call with the RIDOH Wednesday night. As of this time, medical professionals are focusing on those who have been directly exposed to symptomatic patients with a positive test for COVID-19. Those who have come in contact with an individual with a positive test for COVID-19 illness is considered a “contact.” People who have been around a ‘contact” who have no symptoms are considered to be at low risk for exposure to COVID-19. This is the guidance educational professionals in Rhode Island have been given and will continue to follow.

Please bookmark [our website resource page on COVID-19](#) as we continue to curate helpful articles and web links in one location for your reference. Additionally, the RIDOH has added a hotline for questions related to COVID-19 at (401) 222-8022 and RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov should you have any questions at all.

As we've said before, we all have an important role to play in keeping our community healthy. Please continue to wash hands, wash down surfaces as we are doing at school, and maintain physical distance as much as possible as we continue to encourage students and adults to do here. Please stay home, or keep your child home, if ill. We appreciate your help. We are all in this together.

Best,



Allison Gaines Pell
Head of School