

Dear Beechwood Families,

Beechwood has been closely following developments regarding the spread of coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. While we are not aware of any exposure to the virus at Beechwood, however, **we feel it is in the best interest of our school community to close the school starting next week.** We will remain open today (3/12) and Friday (3/13) to allow families to make plans for child care next week. The City of Menlo Park, by order of the City Council, is taking a similar approach to the closure of the Senior Center, The Onetta Harris Community Center and the Belle Haven Child Development Center. If you feel the need to keep your child at home Friday, we totally understand.

During the next two days, we will continue to take appropriate measures to minimize possible exposure by:

1. Sanitizing all surfaces that we touch
2. Requiring students to wash their hands frequently
3. Eliminating touching other people and touching our own faces
4. Students or staff members who have a dry cough, fever and are abnormally tired should stay at home.
5. Limiting Gatherings of students and/or parents to 25 people
6. No non-essential Visitors until further notice
7. All computers and iPads will be sanitized before they change hands from one student to another

### **Why are we closing?**

The best way to prevent the spread of the coronavirus is social distancing. This is very hard to achieve in a traditional school setting where groups of people gather together indoors. We need to do our part as a community to limit exposure for the good of our society. Again, we are not aware of any exposure to the virus by anyone in the Beechwood community at this time. If there is an exposure we will share that information with you.

### **When will school reopen?**

There is no set date for reopening because there is no way to predict when the virus will be under control. I will continue to monitor developments with the spread of the virus very closely. We will continue to follow recommendations made by San Mateo County, The Center for Disease Control and the City of Menlo Park. I will stay in regular communication with you so that you can do your best to make plans for child care.

### **How can I keep my child learning while the school is closed?**

1. We will be discussing, as a staff, the possibility of teaching remotely, also known as “distance learning.” The teacher would film themselves teaching a lesson and students would watch the lesson and have an opportunity to ask questions and talk with classmates. Students can complete assignments and send them digitally to their teachers. This will be easier to do for

students that have access to a laptop or an iPad. It is more likely that this could happen in the upper grader than in the lower grades.

2. We will also ask our teachers to prepare packets that students can work on while they are away from school.
3. This will be a great time for students to pick up a great book and to read, read, read.
4. Limit screen time. If they must be on their devices, choose an app that is educational.
5. Other positive activities might include: cooking, building, art projects, exercising and conversation.

This is a very difficult decision to make but I feel that it is the best course of action at this time. I know that many of you will now face challenges with work and child care; I apologize if this decision makes your life more difficult. We will do everything we can to get Beechwood up and running as soon as possible.

I recognize that this growing global problem is raising fear in our community. It is understandable. I assure you, as the leader of this school, that I will do everything in my power to keep your children safe. I encourage you, as parents, to model calm for your children. Answer their questions, limit media exposure and comfort them if they are worried. They will be following your cues as they try to make sense of the Coronavirus. As always, I am available to talk with you and your children about this. Do not hesitate to share your ideas, feedback, and concerns. You can call, text or email any time. Beechwood has come together in the past to overcome big challenges. I am confident that we will be able to do that with this current challenge as well.

Sincerely,

David Laurance  
Principal, Beechwood School