

March 2, 2020

Dear Salmonberry Families,

I'm sure you have all been following the rapidly evolving news regarding the global, national and local situation and response to the Covid-19 virus. I wanted to briefly share some aspects of what we are doing here at school, and how you can help. (A bit of this will be redundant for Kindergarten families who have already received an email from Paul Brahce)

I was on a call on Friday, 2/28 with SJC Health Officer and all the other school Directors and Superintendents, Librarians, EMT's, physicians etc. We are now receiving weekly updates from SJC Health Dept. As of this morning there had been no mandated school closures in WA State, although nine schools, including Spring Street International School in Friday Harbor did voluntarily close today.

There is a possibility that closures may be mandated at some point in the future, and of course Salmonberry would follow any directives from Health Officers, as well as recommendations from the WA Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In the meantime, we have been teaching and reminding the kids at school to

- wash hands well, with warm water and soap for a full 20 seconds.
- cover coughs by coughing into their elbows
- try to become more aware of touching their own face.

Teachers are now wiping down surfaces of desks, door knobs/handles and other shared surfaces at least twice a day with disinfecting spray.

We are eliminating the use of communal dishes and utensils at school for the short term.

You can help by:

- reinforcing best hygiene practices at home.
- if your child is sick, keeping them home (especially with any fever)
- if it is more than a "normal cold," consider taking them to a physician for assessment.
- making sure your child has a self-contained lunch and snack with their own utensils at school each day
- making sure your child has their own water bottle and/or mug at school. (If you don't have one to spare we can lend these out at school, and they will not be shared communally)

We are doing our best to strike the right balance; not over-reacting to the situation, but also taking seriously this opportunity and obligation to use best practices to limit the spread of infection.

At this point, if there were to be a mandated school closure, the intention of the Health Department would be to slow the spread of infection. While our children seem quite unlikely to manifest any severe symptoms with this virus, as you know, schools are places where viruses are incubated and transmitted. If a closure is mandated, Salmonberry would likely have no school for several days, during which teachers would continue to work, and would focus on identifying and assembling resources that could be used by families for homeschooling purposes. After this period, if mandated closures continue, teachers would share these resource lists as well as recommended books, activities and assignments. Teachers would also be available for scheduled phone or video conference support with parents. The older class may offer some live video classes as well. Other plans are still in development. It is being recommended that working parents consider notifying employers of possible future absences and/or begin to look into alternative in-home childcare options.

Here are a couple of excellent resources for understanding Covid-19 and best practices to staying healthy:

- [Center for Disease Control](#)
- [San Juan County Health Department resources](#)

Thanks for your understanding, help and support.

Best,

Paul Freedman