

**From:** [Fewel Teresa](#)  
**Subject:** extended closures  
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It has been a busy and trying time to try for all of you to keep up with the rapidly changing landscape of Coronavirus-19. Many of you are working hard to implement the necessary cleaning to be done and also what to do in the event of an extended school closure. Across western Washington, school districts and schools both public and private have closed from one day to two weeks.

This action is, of course, very concerning and understandably worrisome to parents throughout the region.

Even today, March 5, 2020, the Office of Public Health - Seattle and King County, is not recommending closing schools at this time unless there has been a confirmed case in the school. Officials have stated, *“The reason we are not recommending school closures at this time is because children have not been shown to be a high risk group for serious illness from this virus. As much as possible, children should be allowed to carry on with their education and normal activities.”*

The Office of Public Health - Seattle & King County stated that schools should make decisions about closures or postponement of activities according to the needs of their community. For example, a Grandparents Day event may warrant cancelling because of the specific population and underlying health concerns for older individuals as it relates to Coronavirus-19. Each school can determine whether it is appropriate and safe to have large groups gather. Schools may want to consider postponing events and gatherings if you are uncertain about the circumstances of an event away from school.

All of us are receiving rapidly changing recommendations, data and information on a daily basis.

One such recommendation is to plan for closures. Schools should prepare for an extended closure of school. Remember it is planning for the unknown. There are no known confirmed cases in any of our 73 schools, yet!

Schools might want to schedule a day of planning. Schools could provide time for staff by extending a scheduled half-day in service already on the calendar to be a full day or scheduling a whole day that would address student learning when schools are closed. This time allows faculty and staff to formulate student-learning plans for the continuation of instruction in the event that there is a need to suspend classes for an extended period.

It is important to convey the importance of this planning to parents and that there has not been any COVID-19 exposure in our schools, that we know about! We just want to be ready; taking one day to plan for the “*what if*” is certainly prudent. In addition, reassure families that the maintenance staff, along with classroom teachers and staff, have continued and broadened cleaning routines and are taking all reasonable measures to ensure a clean, sanitary school environment to protect against the spread of infection. Communicate, communicate, communicate all plans. It is a home-school partnership to conduct online learning for every grade level.

I will continue to share any additional information and/or further instructions and guidelines as they become available.

St Sebastian pray for us!

Terri

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