

## OFFICE OF THE HEADMASTER

March 10, 2020

Dear Austin Prep Parents,

There is no higher priority than the health and safety of the Austin Prep family. I wrote to you last week to let you know that I'm closely monitoring developments related to the spread of the coronavirus and the potential impact it may have on our school community. The situation is fluid and is changing rapidly.

Austin Prep continues to monitor very closely information from the Massachusetts Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). As of this writing, the CDC has [advised](#) that "for most people, the immediate risk of being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low." And while various government agencies have issued advisories related to international travel, they have issued little, if any, instruction related to domestic travel. Schools and businesses are making determinations they feel are best for their organizations.

Out of an abundance of caution after consulting with medical professionals, we have decided to cancel our upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Washington, DC and our 11<sup>th</sup> grade trip to New York City which were scheduled to depart at the end of the week. Both the Governor of New York and the Governor of Maryland, which borders Washington, DC, recently declared a state of emergency in their respective states in response to COVID-19. While I understand this is disappointing news, the health and safety of our community comes first. Unfortunately, and unsurprisingly, the vendor is unable to issue a refund. I wish I had better news.

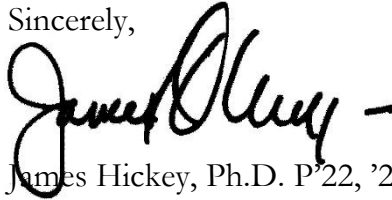
While it's hard to predict the impact of the virus in the coming weeks, Austin Prep will continue to follow the latest advisories from the CDC and Massachusetts Department of Health so that we can take every precaution to keep our students safe. This situation has prompted many types of inquiries related to the impact of future school activities and student travel bans during spring break.

Although no decision has been made on any of these matters to date, the CDC has [advised](#) “this is a rapidly evolving situation and the risk assessment may change daily.” To that end, I anticipate that our school community may have to implement additional preventative measures as circumstances merit.

We continue to sustain enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures at Austin Prep. To reiterate what I wrote in my last letter regarding advice from the medical community, handwashing is an effective defense in minimizing the spread of disease. Additionally, if your child does not feel well, please keep him or her at home. I have asked the staff to follow the same standard about coming to work.

As of this writing, I am not aware of any increased risk at Austin Prep. In addition to the advice of medical and health professionals, let’s also lean on the advice of St. Augustine: “Pray as though everything depends on God. Work as though everything depends on you.”

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Hickey -". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

James Hickey, Ph.D. P'22, '23, '24  
Headmaster