



Dear LTS Family,

As we begin the school week, I write to update you directly.

We are closely monitoring and responding to the evolving risk associated with the outbreak of COVID-19, commonly known as the coronavirus. Our highest priority, now and always, is the health, safety and wellbeing of our students, faculty, visitors and community. For now, there is no indication that any member of our LTS school community is infected or at heightened risk.

Contingency planning is well underway. I have appointed Jo Lacaillade and Jeremy Crumb as co-chairs of our LTS Response Team. Among their myriad responsibilities here, Jo is our lead for government relations and Jeremy for information technology. Jo and Jeremy are serving as our captains on the ground. Jo can be reached at jlacaillade@longtrailschool.org; 802.867.5717 x165 and Jeremy at JCrumb@longtrailschool.org; 802.867.5717 x202. Thank you, Jo and Jeremy.

For now, classes, programs, lunch, co-curricular activities and operations will continue as usual. Here are some steps we are taking to help limit the risk of the spread of infectious disease. We have been reinforcing handwashing and cough hygiene measures with our students and faculty, including washing your hands long and often, and sneezing and coughing into your sleeve. We urge everyone to follow the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on [handwashing and sanitary practices](#). We are cleaning and disinfecting common areas and frequently touched surfaces even more often. Hand sanitizer dispensers are visible and plentiful throughout campus. Disinfecting wipes are in every gathering space and classroom. We have provided additional training to our facilities professionals in the proper use and handling of disinfectants.

Among its priorities, the Response Team is assessing and readying our capacity to teach and learn remotely if we were compelled by the course of the coronavirus to suspend in-person learning on campus.

With regrets, LTS is postponing, until further notice, all student travel to international locations, in particular, our valued exchange program with a sister school in Spain. This decision is consistent with the [latest guidance](#) from the CDC, which cautions that "students may face unpredictable circumstances, travel restrictions, challenges in returning home or accessing health care while abroad." This decision will be a relief to some and disappoint others. Still, this decision is our best judgment for our community's health and safety. Non-airline domestic travel opportunities, in particular Washington, DC, are currently moving forward as planned.

You are part of the process. Stay at home if you are sick, all the more if you are experiencing cold or flu symptoms. We have reviewed our procedures to assure that students who become ill at school or arrive at school sick return home as soon as feasible. We will do our best to keep sick students separate until they can leave.

Our revised [attendance policy](#) has significantly reduced absenteeism and materially enhanced individual and collective learning. This attendance policy, however, includes discretion for the Dean of Students to defer its application in exceptional circumstances. So please let Beth Bove (BBove@longtrailschool.org; 802.867.5717 x107) know if you are staying home because of cold or flu symptoms, or related concerns.

There are plenty of resources, not all reliable, about the coronavirus. We suggest the following. The CDC has released [guidance for schools and childcare programs](#), as part of the [CDC's comprehensive wellspring of information](#). The Vermont Agency of Education has also provided Vermont superintendents and independent schools [guidance on school responses to COVID-19](#). For up-to-date information on COVID-19 responses statewide, call 2-1-1, consult the Vermont Health Department's [2019 Novel Coronavirus website](#) or email Kate Connizzo at kate.connizzo@vermont.gov. Finally, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), to which LTS belongs, is regularly updating its [COVID-19 Guidance for Schools](#), as part of its [COVID-19 resources page](#).

We are following the lead of our public health and education officials and the CDC. We remain vigilant, poised to respond to changing conditions, and prepared to make decisions based on current recommendations. We will continue to keep you informed.

Most salient to me about the guidance from the CDC and other health authorities is that it is heavily oriented toward what we can do to protect *others*, even as we look after ourselves. This perspective goes to the heart of our [core LTS values](#) of Integrity, Kindness of Spirit, Social Responsibility, and Stewardship. Let's seize this opportunity to walk the walk, to live our values and render our response to this health situation one of our school community's finest hours.

With gratitude,
/s/ Seth Linfield
Head of School