

Good Afternoon Grace Academy Parents,

*“God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”*

1 Timothy 1:7

As you may be aware from the earlier text message, Governor Wolf has shut down all schools in Pennsylvania for the next ten business days, starting on Monday, March 16 through Friday, March 27. Governor Wolf said his administration will continue to monitor Covid-19 in the commonwealth, and at the end of 10 days will reevaluate and decide whether continued closure is needed.

There are still many questions that I and my fellow school administrators have about this situation. As more information and clarification comes, I will be sure to pass it on to you. Here are a few things I do know:

- The Upper Elementary Field trip for Monday, March 16 is still on as of today. (Parents will receive a separate email with those modified details.)
- The Lower Elementary Field trip is cancelled for next week. (I hope to reschedule it.)
- Lower Elementary students must still do their guided instruction work for Monday.
- I will be communicating with teachers about sending any work home for students to do during the next two weeks.
- I will keep you posted about any potential changes for the parent/teacher conferences.

I apologize for getting this email out later today than I anticipated. I have been sitting at my desk all day trying to keep up with everything. I've had numerous email drafts ready to send out to you, but the information seemed to change every hour.

Across the nation, the coronavirus is a topic at the forefront of everyone's minds. As a top priority, I have been closely monitoring the situation in collaboration with the York County Office of Emergency Management, Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education and will continue to do so.

I have been working diligently to develop contingency plans for a multitude of possible scenarios that may be presented. It is my goal to ensure transparency and appropriate levels of communication as we navigate this situation together.

First and foremost, I want to encourage your hearts. It is very evident that fear has gripped the hearts of many people with regard to the Coronavirus because there are many unknowns about this disease. Therefore, it is important that we guard our hearts from fear, by replacing it with **faith** and **facts**.

**Faith** comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17). Only the Truth of God's Word is able to overcome fear because His word is alive and powerful (Heb. 4:12). God watches over his Word to perform it (Jer. 1:12), and he sent his Word to heal us (Ps. 107:20). Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, is still at work in the earth through the church (body of Christ)

performing the same works – protecting, helping, healing. Therefore, as we keep our eyes and the confession of our lips in agreement with God’s Word, fear will have no home in our hearts. Here are some other scriptures to encourage you:

- *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.”* 1 John 4:18
- *“Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”* Ps. 91:9, 10

**Facts** about the Coronavirus are also very helpful with guarding our hearts from fear or rash decisions. Here are some fact about Coronavirus:

- Coronavirus is a respiratory illness first identified in China in December 2019.
- **There are presently NO reported cases of Coronavirus in York County or in any neighboring counties.**
- There are 35 total cases in Pennsylvania - mostly in counties neighboring New Jersey.
- [Coronavirus has low to no impact on children.](#)
- People at higher risk:
  - Older adults
  - People who have serious chronic medical conditions:
    - Heart disease
    - Diabetes
    - Lung disease
- [Coronavirus Fact Sheet](#) (Healthy Habits; know the symptoms)
- [Coronavirus Life Span:](#)
  - In the Air – up to 3 hours
  - On surfaces – up to 3 days
    - How to “effectively disinfect” surfaces (see link above)
- [How to talk to kids about Coronavirus](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [How Can I Protect Myself Poster](#)
- [Coronavirus Vs. the Flu: similarities and differences \(John’s Hopkins University\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control Coronavirus Informational Website](#)
- [Pennsylvania Department of Health Coronavirus Informational Website](#)

I am providing this information to you so you are aware of this issue, and so you are assured that we have plans in place to monitor, prepare for, and respond to any health or safety issue that may impact us.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health has provided some important tips for reducing the spread of diseases:

- **Cover** any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!

- **Clean** surfaces frequently, such as countertops, light switches, cell phones and other frequently touched areas. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- **Contain**- if you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

Thank you for your help as we work together to keep our school community safe! I encourage you to talk to your children about this situation. This is a great opportunity for you to walk them through a potentially fearful situation to a faith-based outcome.

I will continue to keep you informed as information comes in and decisions are made. I hope you all have an enjoyable weekend!