Dear parents,

As I am sure you are all aware, the COVID-19 virus has been spreading at alarming rates. This particular virus has not appeared to be especially dangerous to large portions of the population. Still, its highly contagious nature has called for appropriate action to be taken in an effort to stop the rapid spread. I am sure you have noticed that many public events that involve a large gathering of people have been cancelled or postponed. It is no surprise then, that this has now affected the education sector.

On Thursday, March 12, the Ohio Department of Education issued the following statement: "Beginning at the conclusion of the school day on Monday, March 16, all K-12 schools will close to students through Friday, April 3. **This order includes all public, community, and private K-12 schools in the state, but does not apply to Ohio’s childcare system such as daycare centers and home-based childcare providers.** During this extended period of closure, schools should work to provide education through alternative means and school district leadership may make decisions on whether to use their school buildings. Staff members should continue to report to school as directed by administrators. ‘We want to thank educators and administrators for the extraordinary efforts they will take to continue offering services during this time of national crisis,’ said Governor DeWine. Over the next 72 hours, the Ohio Department of Education will develop guidance for K-12 schools to ensure the continuity of important student services, including a strategy for providing meals."

We understand this is extremely inconvenient for all involved. However, as we consider our position under the authority of the state and the message we portray by our actions, we decided that it is only appropriate for us to follow this directive as completely as possible. The decision to close schools across Ohio is being made by professionals who are attempting to curb the spread of this virus. We do not want to be presumptuous and carelessly ignore professional recommendations, which, although extremely inconvenient for them as well, are being given with the good of society in mind.

As you already know, we plan to continue to provide some assignments for our students throughout the next two weeks from March 17 to March 27. For that reason, your student’s books and will be sent home with them today. We are also sending a parent envelope home with student work schedules and answer key copies. As this is an exception to the rule, we expect parents to take responsibility for the use and return of those copies. You will also find a copy of the COVID 19 Testing Schedule and Policies.

These assignments vary greatly depending on the grade level. High school students should expect a fairly significant amount of work in an effort to stay as close to on schedule as possible. The lower the age of the student, the more difficult it becomes to keep them moving forward together academically in a work-on-your-own environment. Younger grades may expect more review types of opportunities as well as reading assignments. The staff has taken the time to evaluate how much work can be completed after the break. Therefore, during this time, we are only assigning what we feel necessary to stay on track. The teachers are expected to be available for support via email and phone communications if you have any difficulties or questions pertaining to student assignments; that is during school hours until March 27th. We are attempting to have the staff be available to come assist moms of younger students and preschoolers or where special needs may arise. Of course, we can’t be everywhere all the time, but please let us know if you are running into difficulties. On the other hand, we are not expecting parents to be able to answer all the questions the older students may have. (maybe it’s a chance for a real life lesson in figure-it-out-ness) If a test is assigned, please note its assigned time in your child’s schedule and bring the preceding answer key copies along when you come. You will receive new answer key copies with the new book at that time. After all the assigned work for your students is completed, **we expect you to bring in all the answer key copies and put them on the teacher’s desk**. Please do your best to have all assignments completed by March 27th. This will help us insure they all return and track who is finished with the assignments. Again, these expectations will vary greatly depending on the age of the student. We invite questions throughout this process.

We want our students to take a Spring Break (March 30 – April 3rd); unplug from school and enjoy your week off. Lord willing, we will be hard at work again starting April 6th. Please bring your students back refreshed and ready to go.

Due to the state planning to do further evaluation of the situation, we are not guaranteed that we will be able to resume normal function April 6th. We will be sending out a revised Spring 2020 Schedule as soon as we know more of the expectations of the state. At this point the change in the spring schedule to count on is that Easter Break is cancelled. We are sorry if this wrecks your plans. In the event that we would need to continue this sort of schooling, you will receive new schedules, expected procedures, and so forth.

This is clearly an unforeseen, unprecedented, and highly inconvenient situation for all of us. Some of the public are responding to this virus with a cynical and nonchalant disregard. Many others are responding with paralyzing fear. Neither are appropriate responses. We want to do our part to stem the spreading of a highly contagious disease, even while understanding that the virus is not particularly dangerous to huge portions of our population. If you are interested in more info, you can check out the video I have listed below. It gives a good “educated, Christian perspective” on the issue. Feel free to draw your own conclusions about his closing comments. 😊 We ask for your continued support, prayer, and understanding as we attempt to make wise choices. We continue to monitor all updates and will be in further communication with you if anything changes.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. II Tim. 1:7

Sincerely,

Bro. Drew, for the EMS Board and Staff

Coronavirus: How we should be thinking and responding as Christians. By Dr. Finny Kuruvilla, Founder of Sattler College

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=26&v=Wy1j_j2mxZM&feature=emb_logo>