

5 March 2020

Dear AISCT Community,

World headlines continue to be dominated by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The spread of the virus appears to be accelerating globally and will likely come to Cape Town at some point. As a school community we have a duty to take all reasonable and possible steps to protect the welfare of our students, staff, and their families, and to ensure the uninterrupted continuity of our educational program.

We are monitoring information on a daily basis and have close connections with the South African Ministry of Health, the US State Department, the Western Cape Education Department, the World Health Organization (WHO), and our sister schools in Shanghai, China. The AISCT School Council and School Board have also provided valuable input and guidance in planning the School's response.

The intention of this message is to provide:

- a community update on the coronavirus;
- an overview of actions AISCT is taking to mitigate any risks and prepare for various scenarios;
- an overview of what parents can do at home.

Community update on the Coronavirus

Coronavirus infections are now reported on all continents except Antarctica. There are 72 countries reporting COVID-19 and over 90,000 confirmed cases. Information on the Coronavirus is readily available from reputable sources. If you have not had a chance to learn about the virus and implications around the global spread, I encourage you to check out the following resources:

- [WHO Situation Reports](#) (updated daily)
- [Discovery Health Overview](#) on the Coronavirus, with a South African focus

The absolute best guidance to follow are these six simple steps that provide protection against coronaviruses, flu viruses, and many other pathogens that are common in South Africa and abroad:

1. **Wash your hands often**, especially after direct contact with people who are ill, or after being in environments where sick people are cared for, like hospitals. Remember to wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds - even if they are not visibly dirty.
 - *Watch this [video](#) for the appropriate way to wash your hands.*
2. **Avoid close contact** with people who have acute respiratory tract infections
3. **Avoid touching** the eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
4. Practice **cough etiquette** - when you cough, maintain your distance from others. Cover your mouth and nose with clothing, or with a flexed elbow or a tissue (discard it immediately) and wash your hands immediately afterwards
5. **Clean and disinfect** frequently-touched objects and surfaces
6. Avoid **eating raw or undercooked animal products**. Handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care to avoid cross-contamination with other uncooked foods. Wash your hands between handling raw food - especially meat - and any other food.



Actions the School is taking

AISCT is taking a number of actions to mitigate risks associated with the spread of the Coronavirus. This includes the following measures:

- Teachers reviewing the 6 essential steps to reduce viral transmission, including hand-washing techniques with students. Students will be provided additional opportunities to wash hands during the day.
- Discouraging the sharing of food or drinks.
- Providing additional anti-bacterial soap in bathrooms and hand sanitizers in all classrooms.
- Ensuring maintenance team use anti-bacterial products on all high-touch surfaces daily.
- Increasing frequency of school building cleaning by maintenance staff.
- Temperature checking capabilities available and continued temperature checks of students or staff displaying symptoms of illness.
- Sending home students or staff with flu-like symptoms, returning only 24 hours after fever has broken.

In addition to the above steps, AISCT is also canceling all non-essential international travel. This same decision is being made by international schools and companies all over the world. The Coronavirus information changes rapidly and the socio-political response to this is unpredictable at best. Immediate quarantines and border-closings have occurred overnight in some countries. We do not want to put our students (or visiting students) in a situation where they could find themselves in a quarantine situation in another county. Unfortunately, this means that our upcoming MUN trip to St. Petersburg, Russia and our international soccer tournament that we were scheduled to host in April are both canceled.

We are also readying our Virtual Learning Plan. This plan describes how we can ensure the preparedness, response, and recovery from emergencies affecting our ability to deliver instruction as a physical school. While this may sound far-fetched at this point in time, other countries in hard-hit virus areas like China, Japan, South Korea, and Italy have already moved to this model. Learning continuance needs to be seen as mandatory for students and an authentic replacement for regular school attendance. Should we be required to move to the Virtual Learning Plan, AISCT will be ready.

What parents can do at home

Parents play a vital role in supporting our students and the School. The first thing to remember is not to panic and avoid any irrational actions. According to current research and news reports, the vast majority of healthy people experience mild to moderate flu-like symptoms if they contract the virus. It is important to keep this in perspective.

We ask parents to focus on personal hygiene at home by encouraging healthy habits to reduce the risk of transmission. This includes washing your hands frequently, opting for hellos instead of handshakes, avoid touching your face with unwashed hands, and using hand sanitizer when you are in a hurry. The six simple steps provided above should become your household norm. If your child is exhibiting cold and/or flu-like symptoms, we ask you to please keep him or her at home and do not send to school until 24 hours after the fever has broken.

Finally, it is of utmost importance that parents are fully connected with accurate contact information on all of the School's communication platforms. This includes the Ed-admin online portal, Edana app (the Ed-admin app), and Google Classroom for parents in 6th grade and above. Please contact the [AISCT technology team](#) if you need support.



You will of course appreciate that no plan is ever perfect. We will continue to do everything we can to take a preventative and proactive approach. Please remember, whether at school or at home: **Planning is Prudent, Panic is Problematic!**

I will continue to provide updates to the school community as the situation evolves. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or suggestions.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Jubert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" and last name "Jubert" clearly legible.

Dr. Daniel Jubert
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