

Hello Pointer Families:

As this situation continues to evolve, administration met with local health leaders (Dr. Aaron Dunn and Dr. Sarah Fox) this afternoon. Based on the latest information they provided on COVID-19, it is now our recommendation to not hold classes Monday or Tuesday this week, as well as the rest of the week.

This is a very different time in our world than we have ever seen. We understand you have many questions, as do we, and we will work to get answers and keep you informed. We also know this situation places burdens on our students and families and we will do everything we can to lend support and build relationships.

The scale of national closure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and direct guidance for social distancing requires our local schools to also take action. By closing schools to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19, we help lessen the burden on hospitals, who have limited resources, which will need to focus their energy on people who are very ill.

We are not aware of any students or staff in the Mineral Point Unified School District who have been infected with COVID-19. However, this situation is changing by the minute and our first positive case could come at any time. The time to prepare is now.

LEARNING SCHEDULE

Monday, March 16 through Friday, March 20 -- No classes and no virtual learning (Certified staff should report Monday, unless they are not feeling well)

Monday, March 23 through Friday, March 27 -- Spring Break (No virtual learning)

Monday, March 30 through Friday, April 3 -- Virtual Learning Days possible

Monday, April 6 -- anticipated school re-opening day (tentative)

Please wait until Tuesday, March 17 to come and pick up belongings (computers, instruments, etc). If you have needed medicine, please contact School Nurse Julie Pompos at julie.pompos@mp.k12.wi.us.

As you know, we have been preparing to continue the educational experiences of our students in the event COVID-19 affects our community by gathering educational resources for students to use at home. More specifics regarding the e-learning plan will be shared with parents through their child's teacher(s). The delay to start Virtual Learning is because staff will need time to develop a plan to deliver quality instruction to all students, including those with special needs.

MEALS

During the weeks of March 16 through March 20, and March 30 through April 3, the District will be providing grab-and-go cold bagged lunches.

Lunches will be provided for children 18 years old and younger.

The elementary school gym will be the only pick-up location. If you would like to participate, please plan to pick up lunch at the elementary between 11 am to 12 pm.

You will not be charged for this meal. Please note this service is not available during Spring Break March 23 through 27.

ATHLETICS, EVENTS, AND ACCESS TO BUILDINGS

All buildings are closed to practices and other district and community group activities beginning Monday, March 16 and throughout the school closure. The state directive says school grounds and facilities cannot be used for instructional purposes or for extracurricular activities. This includes athletics practices or other extracurriculars that regularly occur on school grounds.

COMMUNICATION

We will continue to communicate with you during this time. Please make sure your contact info is up to date in Skyward Family Access. With that said, some schools have been experiencing technical difficulties with their mass alert systems due to the sheer volume of communication being sent. Therefore, please also check our social media and COVID-19 website regularly.

<https://mineralpointschools.org/coronavirus-covid-19-information/>

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Administration met with Dr. Sarah Fox and Dr. Aaron Dunn Sunday afternoon. Schools are closed for a reason. Social distancing is being encouraged by medical experts to help slow the spread of COVID-19. While infected children may not develop severe symptoms, they can still be carriers of the virus and infect more vulnerable people. It is strongly recommended that everyone avoid large gatherings such as attending movies, malls, and other public spaces during the school closure. Avoid getting together with neighbors and friends, especially those who are ill. Video-chatting is a preferred option for social interaction. Try to keep daycare settings small and consistent. If you have any flu like symptoms (fever, cough, trouble breathing), please stay home and call your doctor. "The time is now to be as strict as possible in limiting exposure," said Dunn.

TRAVEL

The CDC has very clear guidelines for those considering any travel in the coming days, weeks, and months. Please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html> to see their full listing of areas/regions to avoid. Please carefully consider any non-essential travel in the coming weeks.

An area may not be considered “high risk” now, but that could change daily. Therefore, we are asking our district families to consider the following:

1. In light of the seriousness of this spreading pandemic, we ask that you please follow the CDC guidance and avoid non-essential travel.
2. Please be prepared for the possibility that upon return from any trip, you might be directed to quarantine or isolate yourself. Any student or employee who is forced to self-quarantine will not be penalized. We have relaxed attendance rules for COVID-19 related issues. The goal is to stop the spread of the virus by limiting contact among ourselves (self-quarantining and avoiding large-scale events where there is a likelihood of exposure). Nobody should be penalized for being responsible and cautious.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

As a reminder, the most important thing you can do to protect yourself is to follow the standard preventive practices. There are a number of steps we can all take to minimize the spread of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

It is important for all of us to do our part to ensure the health and safety of ourselves and our friends, neighbors, and community members. Kindness, compassion, and caring of others is imperative at this time. We will continue to keep you informed throughout this process. Thank you for your partnership as we do our part to keep Pointer Nation safe.

Sincerely,

Mitch Wainwright
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