

Hello Athena Community,

I know we are all in uncharted waters regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am certain you all are busy reorganizing your priorities around health and safety for your family, and also thinking about how to plan for the upcoming weeks for your work life and for your children should the recommendations for self-imposed quarantines continue in the predicted direction to keep everyone safe. I know a big question looming is what are the schools planning to do. At Athena, we are committed to making decisions based on the best interest of the health and safety of all of our children, staff, and families in our community, and are committed to keeping you as informed as possible. We will regularly update our website and social media platforms, and send periodic emails.

In response to the developing and rapidly-changing situation and in consideration of maximizing ways to further prevent the risk of exposure, Athena Montessori Academy will be closed for students from Monday, March 23 to Friday, April 3. We are encouraging families to create contingency plans for children to stay home longer, if we determine a need for a longer closure.

We are currently working on Montessori and other age-appropriate educational resources to be able to share with parents remotely. We are also working on a plan for our teachers to work on units of study, after Spring Break, to be able to send to parents via email for projects, crafts, activities, readings, and discussions that you can do at home with your children. This communication will include lesson plans and resources for Kindergartners. We intend to be a resource for you during this period of school closure, regardless of the length of time we may end up closed.

In order to be able to continue to pay our staff during the school closure and keep our school operational, the final tuition payment of the year will be due, per usual, on April 1st. We will waive late fees if it is your first time to be late on a tuition payment, and if you contact us prior to April 1st letting us know you will need to pay after April 5th. We are also working on a plan to use funds from our recent fundraiser to provide financial support by way of a discounted tuition for the final month to families whose source of income will be directly affected by this situation, such as parents who work in the service industry or are only paid if they are physically at their place of work. If you are in this situation, please reach out to me directly so we can come up with a plan for financial assistance for your family for the final payment.

At this point we do plan to conduct summer camp per usual.

Our Admin Team met Sunday, March 15th, at 3:00 p.m. to discuss the situation and put together a Risk Management Team comprised of members of our admin team and medical professionals in our community to stay on top of the unfolding facts regarding the virus, and to help guide our decisions and courses of action. We are not basing our decisions solely on AISD; we are following closely what the CDC is recommending in addition to all the professional input we are receiving. At this point, we are trying to

review as much information as possible from all channels to make the best, most informed decisions for our community. Our plan is to review information daily, and to update decisions every few days, rather than try to make long-term decisions at this point. Until Austin has had the opportunity to test more people and we understand more about how widespread the virus is in our community, our plan is to be measured, rational, and practical in our approach.

Two of the sites we are following to help inform decisions are:

1. The CDC resource on factors to consider with school closures: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/considerations-for-school-closure.pdf>
2. The CDC website for school administrators, which includes links for how to keep our environments clean as well as best practices for consideration: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

We have thoroughly cleaned and disinfected our campus and it is currently only being visited by administrative and janitorial staff. We are available via email for questions, ideas, thoughts or concerns. Please direct your general questions to Info@AthenaMontessoriAcademy.com. Please stay tuned to our website and social media platforms for regular updates.

Here is some great information and guidelines for keeping your immune system as healthy as possible: [How to Avoid Cold & Flu This Season](#). And: "Follow all the current recommendations for preventing the flu. Do not touch your face or put your fingers in your eyes, nose or mouth. Do not shake hands. Always wash your hands before meals and after you have been in public places. Hot water and soap are required to properly wash your hands. Do not eat or drink after anyone. Practice social distancing. If you follow these recommendations, you will dramatically reduce your risk." —Dr. Glen Luepnitz

We appreciate your being part of our special community and are grateful for your love and support. We are thinking about you and your family during this time of global crisis and wish for you much health and togetherness during this time of uncertainty. From our hearts to yours, we wish you well.

Lisl Friday

Founder, Director

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