

March 16, 2020

**Dear Families,**

Yesterday, the Governor ordered all Montana Schools to close for a period of two weeks from March 16<sup>th</sup> through March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020. In response to this announcement, we did our best to communicate via email, phone calls, social platforms, and by posting on the District website with parents and families last night. This morning, our District staff met to discuss details of this two-week closure. The purpose of this letter is to update you on what we've discussed and programs that are available to those in need during this closure.

**1. What will the instructional expectations be during the two-week closure?**

The two-week closure will be a non-instructional time period. This means that there will not be homework or projects assigned to students from their teachers. Teachers will work to share resources and recommendations with parents that would assist those who wish to have their children continue learning at home. These are just suggestions and ideas – there are no requirements.

Teachers will check in with you throughout the two weeks for Parent Teacher Conferences and to help with any questions.

**2. What if the closure is extended? What will the instruction look like then?**

In the case of an extension of closure, remote learning will start on March 30, 2020 for students in grades K-12. This will look slightly different dependent upon your child's grade level, and teachers will have the flexibility to deliver instruction in various formats and using varied platforms. Instruction and resources will be delivered via technology, and through physical resources. The Junior High and High School plan to use Google Classroom and email as the primary instructional delivery methods. If you do not have reliable access, please contact Mr. Sager for assistance at 686-4621.

For those families who do not have access to technology or Internet, we will have a drop off and pick up time designated at each site once a week. These details will be clarified at a later date if the closure is extended. If school resumes on site on March 30<sup>th</sup>, we will resume our regular days of instruction.

**3. What additional programs are available during this time?**

For those families in need of meals and snacks during the school closure, these are available in Clyde Park and Wilsall to assist families. If you would like to coordinate pick up or drop off of meals, please call Mrs. Taylor at 578-2083, 578-2535, or email Mrs. Taylor at [btaylor@shieldsvalleyschools.org](mailto:btaylor@shieldsvalleyschools.org).

If you wish to continue learning activities at home and are in need of basic supplies, we are more than happy to assist with what we can. Please call Mrs. Taylor if you'd like this assistance.

**4. What if schools re-open and I am still unsure if I want my child to attend?**

In the case school re-opens and you are unsure you want to send your child to school, we respect your choice and would like to work with you to provide your children with access and opportunity to continue their education and learning at home. This option will be most successful if clear communication takes place in the beginning. Please call or email Mrs. Taylor if you will be making this choice.

**5. What is happening with student activities and events that have been scheduled?**

All school activities and events through the middle of April have been postponed and some cancelled. There is not any student travel at this time or extracurricular practices. Please see below for specific event statuses. MHS has also suspended all Spring activities until April 13<sup>th</sup> when they will re-evaluate. We are following the same approach. We will re-evaluate in early April and continue to update the status of activities and events.

<u>Elementary Activities</u>	<u>JH/HS Activities and Events</u>
March 17 <sup>th</sup> – Battle of the Books (Postponed)	March 24 <sup>th</sup> – MASS Band (Cancelled)
March 19 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Crosscut (Cancelled)	March 24 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> – State FFA (Suspended)
March 24 <sup>th</sup> – MASS Band (Cancelled)	JH & HS Track Season (Suspended)
March 26 <sup>th</sup> – Parent Teacher Con (Remote/Tele)	March 26 <sup>th</sup> – Parent Teacher Con (Remote/Tele)
April 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Kindergarten Screening (Postponed)	April 3 & 4 – District Music Festival (Suspended)
Girls on the Run Spring Season (Cancelled)	April 4 – Donkey Basketball (Cancelled)
	April 16 – Petting Zoo (Cancelled)

\*More activities updated at a later date\*

**6. Who should we contact if we have questions, and where should we go for updates?**

Questions about the closure can be directed to Mrs. Taylor (578-2535 or [btaylor@shieldsvalleyschools.org](mailto:btaylor@shieldsvalleyschools.org)) or Mr. Sager (686-4621 or [gsager@shieldsvalleyschools.org](mailto:gsager@shieldsvalleyschools.org)). If you have questions about the resources and recommendations, please feel free to email your child's teacher. For updates about when students will return to school or forward movement, please monitor your email and check the District's webpage. We will do our best to update you, as we know more. It is likely most updates will not occur until near the end of the two-week closure.

As a reminder, based on the current recommendations, the **steps to protect against corona virus** are the same steps to take for the prevention of the spread of illnesses like the common cold and influenza:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. 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 mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

**Recommendations for Spring Break Travel**

As spring break approaches, be aware that travel to some areas may result in restrictions for school attendance upon return. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued travel advisories for areas experiencing the coronavirus epidemic. Right now, the CDC is recommending that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China, Iran, South Korea, and Europe. You can check for updates at the following site: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>

Please note that:

- Any staff or student returning from a [CDC designated Level 3 location](#) will be required to stay home for 14 days after returning to the United States. *(These advisories can change on short notice, as the disease spreads. If staff or students travel to a location that is added to the list prior to the end of spring break, they will be held to the same standards.)*
- Staff or students who return and are sick with a fever or cough or who have trouble breathing should call their health-care provider before seeking medical care in order to avoid spreading the disease to others in the medical setting.
- If a person has a respiratory infection and a fever after interacting with someone who recently traveled to an impacted area, he or she should call a health-care provider as soon as possible.
- We acknowledge that postponing or canceling plans can be inconvenient and difficult, but we are asking staff and students to re-evaluate spring break plans if they intend nonessential travel.

We will continue to communicate more information as it becomes available. Please continue to monitor the District's webpage, be available via the phone number you have on file and check your email regularly. Thank you for your understanding as we continue to work together to keep our staff, students, and communities safe.

Respectfully,

*Billi Taylor*  
Superintendent  
Shields Valley School District