



Dear Parents:

Greetings from “Hotel Amstutz” as we are currently calling our house. It feels a bit crowded, but we are just grateful to have all of our kids home and safely residing under one roof. Our dogs, Ella and Hunter, are still trying to figure out why everyone is here, but they are thrilled with the significant increase in daily walks.

It's been over a week since I last communicated with you so an update is in order. Following the governor's most recent executive order, we completely shut down the school facility. Officer Chris will conduct daily inspections to make sure all is in order, and outside contractors are wrapping up the emergency installation of our core chiller. While this is a difficult time financially to replace an expensive chiller, the current closure eliminates a difficult scheduling issue for the school and Trinity.

Per the governor's executive order, the plan remains to start up regular school again on May 4. Many think this closure order will be extended, so our contingency plans include finishing out the semester in remote learning mode. While no one desires this, I'm heartened by the optimism and tenacity with which our teachers are quickly honing their remote teaching skills. The long hours they are spending on lesson planning, finding helpful online sites, sharing best practices with one another, and continuously improving their teaching are a testament to their commitment to your children. Your feedback on the recent survey was very positive, and this data will guide the changes and improvements we will roll out following spring break.

Our administrators are focused on supporting our teachers in their core work of teaching and learning, staying current on the latest developments in remote learning, communicating effectively with different constituents, and planning for a highly uncertain future. This uncertainty is impacting next year's enrollment numbers at a time when SRES is paying off the remaining debt on the new wing, purchasing the aforementioned chiller, and dealing with a 20% drop in the school's endowment. All of this creates a tension between keeping tuition costs down and retaining our loyal and deserving faculty & staff whose compensation/benefits account for 75%-80% of our overall costs.

A few of you have asked about refunds or a discount on tuition. As our teachers continue to provide effective teaching remotely, the school will not issue discounts or refunds. We

discussed this earlier this week with the Executive Committee of the Board, and it was felt that the better approach is to offer modest emergency financial aid packages to families which have experienced economic hardships stemming from the pandemic. Contact Abby Williams to explore this. It's important to note that we wrap lunch fees into our annual tuition. Likewise, our before- and after-care costs for Early Childhood, included in tuition, result in a very generous value proposition designed to attract families to St. Richard's. Until we have more information, we will assume that summer camp will take place; therefore, we will not issue refunds at this time. If this changes, you will be reimbursed accordingly. We pride ourselves on being fair with all of you in such matters.

It is also worth restating that all students at St. Richard's benefit from our annual draw on the endowment, the Annual Fund, and part of the proceeds from Regalia. Your generous support for the Annual Fund and Regalia, which is postponed to May 8 at this time, is needed now more than ever.

To our grade 8 parents – this is not the way your child's final year at SRES is supposed to end. However, we will remain optimistic about graduation, field day, awards assembly, etc., while also planning for creative solutions should the governor's current restrictions continue into the summer. We remain committed to honoring and celebrating our most senior Dragons and will be in touch with you regarding the Washington D.C. trip reimbursement.

I remain incredibly grateful to be associated with all of you and your children, our hardworking and caring teachers, committed administrators and staff, the good and wise people on our boards, the supportive members of Trinity and the Episcopal Diocese, and the many alumni and donors who stand behind our school so faithfully.

Though this will be a different type of spring break for many, please enjoy your time away from school. Those of you who have been working full-time and helping us teach your children are particularly in need of rest. Thanks again to all of you for carrying on despite the heavier loads.

Be sure to check out the front page of the website and/or social media tomorrow. We have planned a fifteen minute assembly featuring students singing, videos, etc. We hope it will remind us of all that is good about St. Richard's, whether we are in the actual building or not.

See you online in a couple of weeks!

David Amstutz  
Head of School

