

# KEYSTONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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March 11, 2020

## **RE: Moratorium on Field Trips**

Dear Parents/Guardians, Students & Staff:

As I stated in a recent district-wide notification concerning the Coronavirus (COVID-19), protecting the health, safety, and welfare of Keystone School District students, staff and other individuals within our school community is our foremost priority. With that in mind, we've made the decision to place a moratorium on all planned field trips.

We recognize that field trips—*any trip by students away from school premises that are an integral part of approved planned instruction*—are an important component of the instructional program of the schools. With that in mind, the guidelines that govern student field trips must ensure that the safety and well-being of students will be protected at all times. Furthermore, if the safety of students, staff or other participants could potentially be jeopardized, it is incumbent upon the administration to cancel the activity.

There are multiple variables to consider when making these decisions. As previously stated, protecting the health, safety, and welfare of students, staff and other individuals within our school community is our primary responsibility. While many have asserted that young people are not widely affected by this virus, we have to keep in mind that young people can serve as carriers. Adults and children alike can be immunocompromised, which places them at greater risk. Further, many young people live with (or spend time with) grandparents, which do tend to be a population at greater risk from COVID-19. Given the fact we have no real way of predicting how this virus will manifest itself in the coming days, we also have an obligation to protect any financial investments being made toward field trip activities. For example, some trips require a non-refundable deposit. Given the state of uncertainty surrounding future restrictions, we are taking steps to responsibly protect field trip expenditures.

I recognize the fact that some people view these precautions as unnecessary and overstated. We take these actions out of an abundance of caution and to mitigate unnecessary risks. While we maintain close control over cleaning operations within the district, we cannot ensure that other institutions and locations are taking those same precautions. Social distancing and appropriate preventive measures (outlined by the CDC) are critically necessary to reduce further transmission.

Several activities, conferences and other events are being cancelled across the Commonwealth. We will continue monitoring this evolving situation in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH), and other health-related agencies. Further communication will be distributed when the moratorium on field trips has been lifted.

In closing, I can certainly understand your disappointment or frustration with this decision. Nonetheless, our primary goal is to preserve the health and safety of our students, staff and the school community.

Sincerely,

Shawn Algoe, Superintendent