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BELLE VALLEY LETTER TO FAMILIES REGARDING STATEWIDE MANDATORY SCHOOL CLOSURES MARCH 17-30

March 16, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Thank you for your extraordinary support over the past several days, as we have worked together to protect our community during the growing coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. To further safeguard Illinois from the spread of the virus, Governor JB Pritzker has declared mandatory school closures for all buildings, both public and private, serving pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students. This mandatory closure takes effect Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Currently, we anticipate reopening on March 31.

Students who receive free breakfast and lunch will still be provided these meals. The buses will be delivering breakfast and lunches at the normal bus stops, however this will occur two hours later than the normal pick up time. For example, if the bus picks up your child at 6:50 a.m, your meal pick up will be at 8:50 a.m. Food services will begin on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 and continue Monday through Friday throughout the closure.

Teachers are committed to keeping students engaged in their learning during the closure by preparing educational opportunities which include lesson packets and some on-line activities and resources. Teachers shared these with your child and are sending them home today. It is important to encourage your child to work 2 to 3 hours a day on the lessons provided. Please contact your child's teacher via class DoJo, email, Google classroom, school website, or classroom phone if you have any questions concerning assignments. To supplement these services, we encourage you to engage your children in other free, online educational activities. The Illinois State Board of Education has compiled a library of resources at www.isbe.net/keeplearning. School administrators and personnel will be on site during the closure for any questions.

Concern over this new virus can make children anxious. It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If adults seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise. Adults should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy. Children also need factual, age-appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk, so the focus of conversation should be concrete instructions about how to avoid infections and the spread of disease. Teaching children positive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infections can help reduce anxiety. Please talk with your children about precautions they can take to stay healthy, including:
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- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is best, especially if they are visibly dirty. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is a suitable alternative. Consider showing your children one of these videos about proper handwashing technique: www.cdc.gov/handwashing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Stay home if you are able to stay home. Avoid travel if you can.

The National Association of School Psychologists has additional guidelines about talking to children about COVID-19 at [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-andpublications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisisresources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-andpublications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisisresources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource). We will continue to inform you as quickly as we can about any further changes to school services. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school at 618-236-5200.

We appreciate your partnership, and we will get through this together.

Sincerely,
Belle Valley Administrative Team

*Special Note:

3rd Quarter grades will be posted online by Thursday morning March 19, 2020. Report cards will go home with students when the district reopens.