Dear Maddux School Families,

I’m writing with an update on The Maddux School’s approach to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation. First, I would like to thank you for your support and patience as we continue to address the complexities related to planning and communicating during this time. We’re committed to providing a reliable, safe education for your children. Please know, The Maddux School will consider the health and safety needs of all of our students when making decisions.

PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES
As I wrote in my March 6 email, we are implementing recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for protecting schools and childcare programs. Additionally, the Maddux School has taken the following measures:

- **New handwashing practices**: Students are now being guided to wash hands immediately upon arrival, between groups, before and after snack and lunch, and at several other points during the day. All visitors to Maddux are also being required to wash hands or use sanitizer immediately upon entering the school.

- **Handwashing demonstration**: Maddux occupational therapists taught a lesson to each class on March 9 about proper handwashing techniques, practiced with all students, and continue to model best practices throughout the day.

- **Water fountains covered**: For the time being, all water fountains have been covered at The Maddux School and Ivymount School. We ask you to send a re-fillable water bottle with your student. We are also providing bottled water to those who need it.

- **Daily cleaning**: Maddux staff are cleaning high-use areas frequently, including wiping down desks, counters, door handles, railings and other commonly-used materials. Bathrooms are cleaned multiple times per day. Overnight cleaning staff have been provided CDC information on proper cleaning techniques.

- **Practicing Social Distancing**: Whenever possible, we are following CDC best practices to implement social distancing practices, such as working with smaller groups of students and rearranging desks so students are spaced at least 3 feet from each other.

- **Reconsideration of shared space**: Across the corporate programs housed in Ivymount buildings, we are looking at reducing transitions across shared spaces. Starting Monday, March 9, we began holding all programs in The Maddux School wing and playground. We will dismiss students from their own classrooms so please be patient while we shift our procedures.

- **Monitoring staff health**: We have reiterated to staff our expectation that they will monitor their health and remain home if they have a fever, cough, shortness of breath, or nausea, or if they have a family member with symptoms.

- **Reiterating student sick policy**: We want to emphasize again the policy outlined in the Family Handbook, which requires students to remain home for 24 hours after a fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medication. This is consistent with CDC recommendations. If your child or immediate family member is ill, please contact me by email.

March 11, 2020
HOW WE ARE TALKING TO THE CHILDREN
Our primary goal in communicating with the students is to maintain a feeling of calm and safety. We talk about ways we keep ourselves healthy, such as getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods, washing our hands, sneezing into our elbows, etc. In response to questions that arise about coronavirus, we try to address individual concerns, rather than open up the discussion to the whole group. We use calm, friendly tones to keep from triggering anxiety and reassure students of the cleanliness and safety of our school environment.

SCHOOL CLOSURES
We will follow the guidance of officials from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in relation to school closures. We have also identified scenarios in which we may make our own decision to close. For example, in the event that Ivymount School closes, The Maddux School will also close. If a sibling attends a school that closes, we ask that you let us know. While we hope that school will remain open, I am meeting regularly with Maddux staff to prepare a plan for sharing resources and developmentally appropriate work packets that families can choose to do with their children. You will be hearing more about this plan in the coming days.

COMMUNICATIONS
This situation will continue to evolve and we will communicate as new developments occur in the following ways:
• I will email you with updates that impact our students.
• School closures will be communicated through our CrisisGo emergency app and by email.
• For efficient and comprehensive communications, as of Thursday, March 12, all updates will also be posted to the [COVID-19 dropdown] on the Ivymount School and Programs website, which is located under the Resources tab. You will see a communication about a high school jobsite that was sent to Ivymount families. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) quickly reported there was “no specific concern” related to Ivymount students. Ivymount Corporation strategy will be to include all corporate programs, including Maddux School, Ivymount School, and Outreach, in communications in the event of specific risk.

I want to emphasize that our Maddux School team deeply cares about your student and your family. We are being proactive in our preparations, and are open to your concerns and ideas, and committed to maintaining the calm, nurturing environment that helps your children thrive.

Sincerely,

Andrea Mullins
School Director