



March 13, 2020

Dear Community,

I hope you are doing well in this uncertain time. The continual developments of the COVID-19 outbreak are leading to a lot of stress and anxiety for us all, and we invite you to use your mindfulness practice as a resource. Mindful Schools is currently developing a collection of mindfulness exercises designed to help our community navigate through this difficult time, and will continue to share them regularly with you.

Our team is closely monitoring COVID-19 as the situation unfolds, taking into account recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and local health agencies. While we are still months away from our retreat season, we will continue to track the implications for our program and will update you as new information comes to light and decisions are made. Our intention is to approach this situation from a place of wisdom, compassion and calm. With variables changing on a daily basis, we hope the information shared here provides you with enough clarity to make arrangements for travel in the midst of uncertainty.

**Based on available guidance at this moment, we are currently proceeding with our plans to host our Opening and Closing Retreats this summer for the Mindful Teacher Certification Program and are looking forward to connecting with you.**

**However, in light of the above-mentioned concerns, we want to share the following contingencies:**

#### **TRAVEL**

- We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance for any flights or other travel plans. Please ensure that your purchased policy would cover illness or other COVID-19-related cancellations; the best recommendation is to purchase a "cancel for any reason" policy. Travel insurance may be available as an add-on, even after you have reserved your flight.
- Many airlines have announced that they will waive cancellation or rebooking fees if you book your travel before March 31, 2020. We recommend confirming your airline's policy before booking your flight.



- Mindful Schools is not responsible for participants' financial losses due to cancelled flights or other travel costs, however the suggestions above provide ways to help mitigate any losses.

## RETREAT VENUE

We encourage you to register with your selected retreat venue as soon as possible. We understand that changing conditions could make it impossible for some participants to attend the retreat. In that case, the following contingencies would apply:

- **External travel prohibition.** If you are unable to attend the retreat due to government-imposed travel restrictions or medically-required travel restrictions (virus exposure or documented medical condition that places you at high risk for contracting the virus), the Garrison Institute and Shambhala Mountain Center will fully refund your retreat registration fees.
- **Personal choice.** For participants who elect to not travel to the retreat, the standard venue cancellation policies will apply:
  1. [Shambhala Mountain Center](#) cancellation policy (a refund minus a 2.75% cancellation processing fee 14+ days prior to arrival; a program credit, good for 2 years, for cancellations 2-13 days prior to arrival)
  2. [Garrison Institute](#) cancellation policy (a \$65 cancellation fee if cancelled 1 week prior to arrival; a \$65 cancellation fee plus food cost of \$40 per day of retreat if cancelled 1-6 days prior to arrival)
- Registration: The retreat registration deadline for 2020 Opening Retreats is May 1, 2020.

## PROGRAM

- **External travel prohibition.** For participants who cannot travel to their Opening or Closing Retreat due to externally imposed travel restrictions (government travel prohibition or medically documented restriction):
  - Mindful Schools will waive the \$500 administrative fee for deferral or alternate option attendance.
  - Participants will be provided an option to complete the program requirement and still achieve course completion status on time.
- **Retreat center closure.** In the case that a retreat center is forced to close due to government restriction on mass gathering, Mindful Schools would provide an online-only version of at-home retreat to all program participants. This option would involve a nominal administrative fee to offset the costs of creating and delivering this content virtually.



- **Personal choice.** For participants who elect to not travel to the retreats for personal choice, the standard administrative fee will apply. The retreats are a program requirement and necessary to build community and commitment. We understand that external situations may change, and as our understanding about the progress of the virus continues, we will continue to update our policies.
- **Precautions.** If the spread of Novel Coronavirus remains a health concern during the time of our retreats, we will take all necessary precautions in our program delivery to limit the transmission of the virus. This includes practices like not passing microphones or other objects among participants and not planning any activities that call for handshaking or other touch.

We will continue to provide updates in the coming weeks and we hope to be able to provide more online practice resources to support you all. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Wishing you well,



Megan Sweet  
Director of Training at Mindful Schools