

Adirondack Daily Enterprise

International students stay at North Country School through spring break



North Country School students Kendiu, left, and Abezu opt out of a chicken harvest and instead pick brussels sprouts from the garden. Farm chores are part of daily life for students at the Lake Placid boarding school. (Enterprise photo — Griffin Kelly)

LAKE PLACID — North Country School is on its spring break currently, but when classes begin again on March 19 only some of its 75 students will be returning back to campus, due to coronavirus concerns.

Around 20 international students are already on campus, Executive Director Todd Ormiston said. The school stayed open when the school went on break Feb. 29, so they could live there instead of traveling to their home countries.

Ormiston said the school is considering the return of local day students on a case-by-case basis, based on if/where they traveled for spring break. If it was to a place where there are travel concerns, he said they are being told to stay home for two weeks. The school is also restricting return to both international and domestic boarding students, with an earliest estimated date of return set for April 5.

For these students, he said the school is introducing a remote learning module, where they can follow classes online. Ormiston said the school has not previously had this in place.

“It’s an opportunity for us to establish this,” Ormiston said.

He said nearly all the international students stayed on campus instead, while coronavirus spread around the globe.

“Parents of international students were very appreciative,” Ormiston said. *“We made the decision in the end of January to open campus to especially our Asian population. That was when the real heft of the outbreak was happening in China and it was a really important thing to keep our students healthy and safe.”*

He said these students have housing, food, classwork and activities, all provided locally, during the nearly three-week break from classes.

Other schools in the area, in Newcomb and Keene, have large international student populations. They have not had their spring breaks yet, so they have not yet set a policy for if students are returning from travel home.