



May 12, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we move further into May and find ourselves within four weeks of Prize Day on Sunday, June 6, I am glad to have this opportunity to provide a final spring session update. As you know, the year has been characterized by tentative plans, pivoting along the way, and evolving approaches to how we have held school. We hoped this final stretch of the year would allow us a greater degree of flexibility with our program than we experienced in the fall or winter. To this point, these hopes have been realized with roughly 90 percent of our students attending school in person, interscholastic sports up and running, and the community doing a good job of maintaining campus safety. We are now well into sixth-form speeches in Chapel and have been able to have all in-person students in the class of 2021 attend these talks live. Finally, it has been great fun to see a number of you on campus for games and the visiting days we have hosted. The light is getting brighter at the end of the tunnel, and we are finding our way to more and more of what we have missed and what makes us whole. We want to do all we can to ensure this trend continues all the way to the end of the year. Finally, thanks so much to all of you who shared such a long list of wonderful raffle prizes as part of our community appreciation event last week. With 45 winners, it is safe to say that the event was a big hit!

### **Spring Session**

We noted in our April letter that our intake testing results were extremely favorable and this trend has continued. To date, we have had just one student test positive for COVID-19 since intake testing began on March 28, and we are doing all we can to stay this course. As you may know, some schools in our area have had small outbreaks and a great deal of contact tracing quarantine. While we have worked hard to avoid any kind of outbreak throughout the year, the stakes are higher in some respects over the final two weeks. With the prom, Lawn Ceremony, and Prize Day scheduled for our final three Sundays of the year, we want to be especially attentive to all in-person health and safety guidelines. This is particularly important for students who are commuting to and from school each day and have greater potential for exposure if they are not adhering to our guidelines. We understand that patience with protocols is wearing thin and that the state is moving in a direction of loosening restrictions. We also know that the last thing we want to be confronting are positive cases and extensive quarantine requirements that prevent students from attending any, or all, of these culminating events of the year. So, we appreciate your help with these protocols as we do our best to keep the community healthy by controlling all that we can control. Thank you.

**Vaccination** - A pleasant and increasingly rapid development this spring has been the rate at which adults, and now students, in the community are getting vaccinated. With most of the school's employees fully vaccinated, we have now been able to get well over 120 students into a vaccine protocol that will have all of them fully vaccinated before the end of the school year. This number is in addition to many who have been vaccinated on their own. As I suspect you know, studies are revealing with increasing conviction that these vaccines are extremely effective at both preventing COVID-19 infection and effectively eliminating adverse effects in the very rare cases when a vaccinated person does contract the virus. Thus, we will continue to encourage all in our community to get vaccinated and are glad to help if your child is eligible and has not yet made an appointment.

**Vaccination and Reentry Protocols** - The current guidelines with which we are working determine one to be fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving a final vaccination dose. As noted in our last

letter, we are allowing vaccinated community members not participating in interscholastic athletics to opt out of our surveillance testing protocol if they choose. In addition, any community member who is fully vaccinated and asymptomatic will not be subject to quarantine if determined to be a close contact of someone who tests positive for COVID-19.

With increasing numbers of students approaching, and reaching, the fully vaccinated threshold, we have implemented a different reentry protocol for those students subsequent to taking the one elective absence of any length that each in-person student is permitted to take this spring. In sum, a fully vaccinated and asymptomatic student may return directly to in-person school following an overnight elective absence in conjunction with Health and Wellness Center approval. If you have questions about this revised protocol, please let us know.

We will continue to monitor all public health guidelines over these final few weeks and assess whether any additional changes make sense within our campus safety plan. With a goal of being fully intact over the final two weeks of the year, we will err on the side of caution through Prize Day on June 6.

***Interscholastic Athletics and Afternoon Programs*** - After a long absence, we have been so pleased to see our students on playing fields and lakes, enjoying sports they love. We are coming off our fourth weekend competing and are scheduled to continue with games through Saturday, May 29. We will continue to finalize plans with opposing schools at the beginning of every week, so please be sure to check the school's website for [updates regarding time and locations](#). As a reminder, we ask that not more than three family members or friends per athlete attend athletic events on our campus. No one from the Brooks community other than players, coaches, managers, and athletic office personnel may attend a game, race, or match on another school's campus or athletic facility. Thanks very much for your help with these guidelines.

***Brookstock*** - Those of you who are parents or guardians of students performing in our Brookstock concert this Sunday between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. may attend the event on campus. We will ask that you stay outdoors at all times and adhere to the same guidelines we have set for athletic games: no more than three guests per performer.

***Parent and Guardian Visits*** - It was nice to see a number of you on campus this past Sunday afternoon enjoying the campus and time together with your children. We will have one more visiting day of this sort:

**Sunday, May 23, from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.** - This year's prom will be held during the evening, and we have decided to ask parents and guardians of students not attending the prom to visit between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. on this day. For those of you who are parents or guardians of students attending the prom that night, we ask that you visit between 3:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. There will be time for pictures and such during this window of time.

***The End of the Year*** - As we get closer to being in the final couple of weeks of the year, we remain on track with all of the year's culminating events. Here is both a reminder and an update about what is to come:

- *Sunday, May 23* - As noted above, this is both a parent visiting day and the date of the prom. There will be an opening for parents to take prom photos later in the afternoon, and we are still trying to find safe ways to have hair stylists and such work with students who are attending the event here on campus. We have also developed a protocol that will allow fifth- and sixth-form students attending the school virtually to attend the prom, if they would like. These arrangements need to be made through the Student Affairs Office. We will share additional prom updates as they materialize.
- *Friday, May 28* - Final day of classes for all students
- *Saturday, May 29* - Final day of interscholastic athletic competition
- *Sunday, May 30* - We will hold our Lawn Ceremony at 2 p.m. for in-person community members while livestreaming the event to all who would like to attend that way. After considering surveys completed by parents, guardians, and students in the class of 2021, we have decided to confer all prizes typically awarded during the Lawn Ceremony at this time. We are still unclear about how we might have a version of our "Boo Hoo Chapel" following the Lawn Ceremony, but are keeping the possibility open with vaccination levels rising.

- *Monday, May 31* - Exhibitions of Learning will begin for members of the classes of 2022, 2023, and 2024, and will run through the week.
- *Tuesday, June 1* - We are on course to have the class of 2021 depart for a two-day trip to Maine to enjoy time together at a summer camp facility. There will be a lot of outdoor activities to choose from, and this will include a white water rafting trip for those who are interested.
- *Thursday, June 3* - The class of 2021 returns from their two-day trip to Maine.
- *Friday, June 4* - Class of 2021 graduation rehearsal and on-campus events. Exhibitions of Learning conclude. All members of the classes of 2022, 2023, and 2024 may depart for summer vacation as soon as they have completed their final Exhibition of Learning at any point during this week.
- *Saturday, June 5* - SAT testing for members of the classes of 2022 and 2023 who would like to take the test on campus. There will be an evening program for members of the class of 2021 and their parents/guardians attending graduation weekend. This will take place under the large tent we will have assembled on its traditional location behind the Head of School's house.
- *Sunday, June 6* - Prize Day will be held in the morning and conclude by lunch. You should have received an email on Saturday, May 8, asking you to submit your attendance list. You can also access the [graduation guest registration form](#) directly. In addition, you can find all [Commencement 2021 information](#) on our website. This includes our vaccination and testing protocol for all who are attending the weekend's events.

## **2021-2022 School Year**

While next year continues to feel far away, we appreciate that June, July, and August can come and go in a flash. Thus, we will pivot quickly from finishing this year to monitoring and defining plans for next year, once the class of 2021 graduates on June 6. We anticipate having an initial view about the 2021-2022 school year at some point during the second half of June, but I do want to reiterate that we remain confident about our ability to run our whole program beginning with student arrivals in early September. While we will have more to share as spring moves to summer, we are developing a COVID-19 vaccination policy that will require all students and employees to be fully vaccinated before school begins. While there are still particulars to work out, and we will allow for religious and medical exemptions, the approval of the vaccine for 12-15 year olds means everyone in our community will be eligible. In cases where access is a challenge over the summer months, we will be able to make arrangements to have students and employees vaccinated when we get started in September. The higher the vaccination level, the greater our ability to operate our whole program. We will look forward to sharing more information as it develops.

This will likely be our final update of this sort within the 2020-2021 school year. As such, I want to thank all of you for your support throughout the year. We have so enjoyed beginning to see some of you on campus during these spring months, and are certainly looking forward to spending more time with you over these final few weeks. This year has required a group effort in ways we never would have been able to imagine 15 months ago. Your care and engagement has made an enormous difference. Thank you.

If you have any questions, please let me know. For now, take good care.

Best,

John R. Packard  
Head of School