



July 22, 2020

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

I continue to hope all of you are well and enjoying the summer. We have had a busy two weeks since we were last in touch and would like to provide this update regarding our planning for 2020-2021.

I noted in our last letter that we have little ability to control how COVID-19 infection rates evolve in Massachusetts and the United States, but we want to do all we can at school to be prepared for a range of scenarios. We are continuing to move forward in that spirit. Unfortunately, infection rates across the country have increased through July at an alarming pace, and this trend has us revisiting some of what we have shared and discussed with you over the past four weeks. In this letter, we have two overarching goals: First, we want to share our evolving thinking about the health and safety measures we are contemplating within the current context of infection rate growth. Second, we are including updated academic program information and the weekly schedule we will follow regardless of whether we are in a virtual or in-person mode. We look forward to more discussion about both matters with all of you during [Thursday evening's webinar](#) at 6:30 pm EST.

Here is the current state of our thinking:

Health and Safety - This work continues to be primary to all of our thinking about holding school on campus in 2020-2021. We have made, and continue to make, substantial progress in getting the campus ready and establishing health and safety protocols for all community members. We have also felt a need to think carefully and critically about activity outside of our predominantly residential community, with a growing feeling that we will need to prohibit some group activities that happen off campus.

In terms of progress made, we continue a deep cleaning of all school facilities and anticipate having this work completed by early August. Our Health and Wellness Center has been remodeled to provide a separate entrance to an isolated area for anyone who becomes COVID-19 symptomatic. We have three large tents reserved and will be making use of them on campus for dining, community, and academic purposes. We are moving in the direction of establishing the following testing protocol:

1. We will ask all students to be tested within one week of their arrival to Brooks -- at some point during their second week of quarantine. From there, each student will be expected to bring evidence of a negative test result with them to school.

Any student who travels to school by air, train, or any form of public transportation, will be required to have a test administered upon arrival. Those who are tested on campus will need to quarantine at school until the test result is in.

2. All students will be tested a second time within 7-10 days of their arrival to school.
3. We are still determining what our ongoing testing regimen will be subsequent to the first two tests, but are planning to continue testing in some fashion.
4. As a reminder, we will be able to get testing on-demand for any symptomatic community member in the Health and Wellness Center throughout the fall.

We are also moving in the direction of a daily attestation that will ask all community members a short set of questions regarding movement and interaction over the previous 24 hours. We would use these records to contact trace in the case of a community member testing positive for COVID-19. In addition, we are considering a phone application that would trace movement and interaction with others in the community, and provide an additional layer of data for contact tracing purposes.

All of this progress has us confident that the steps we are taking substantially increase our ability to mitigate COVID-19 risk. With concern about the growth of infection rates in the country, and uncertainty about whether New England will experience its own increase in infection rates over the next month, we are considering a number of steps that would limit outside-of-school group activity. To be clear, we have not made a final decision about what might or might not be permitted outside of school for those attending school in person. We do, however, feel a need to let all of you know that there is a chance we will not allow in-person students to participate in group activity outside of school. This would happen in conjunction with Massachusetts guidelines and by using our best and informed judgment about ensuring campus safety to the best of our ability.

We fully appreciate the value and importance of group activity outside of school for our students. We also know that these outside groups are doing their best to adhere to COVID-19 safety guidelines. We do not necessarily believe there is a one-size-fits-all approach for the school to follow. We do know, however, that the more we limit group activity outside of our immediate community, the greater the ability to be both safe and less restricted in our interaction with one another on campus. Any step we take to curtail activity beyond campus will be taken with maximizing the safety of the on-campus community in mind.

Finally, any student and family who ultimately determines that our approach to restricting group activity outside of school in the fall is unworkable will be permitted to attend school virtually at that tuition level, or withdraw from school without any financial penalty. It is, of course, our hope that we will find a way to keep all of our students enrolled in whatever mode best suits them during this challenging and uncertain time.

Academic Program - Earlier this week, Academic Dean Susanna Waters shared a substantial amount of [academic program information](#) related to viewing courses and textbook ordering. Our academic program task force has done an extraordinary amount of work to move from the virtual model we were in during the spring to a blended teaching model and [academic schedule](#) we are excited to unveil in this letter. As noted in previous letters, we will be able to work simultaneously with students who are both remote and in person. We will be able to move seamlessly to an exclusively virtual mode if circumstances require us to do so. With so much still in flux due to the

pandemic, we are pleased to have our academic program in as solid a place as it can be. We look forward to discussing the details and addressing your good questions during tomorrow evening's webinar.

Calendar - At this point, there has been no change in our plans regarding the following dates:

Monday, August 17 - Friday, August 21 - We are planning to allow boarding students to move belongings into their rooms on specified days during this stretch. The school will determine those dates and no students will be allowed to take up residency this week.

Sunday, August 23 - Sunday, August 30 - We are planning to welcome students back to school during this stretch in a staggered format. Here, too, the school will determine when students will be permitted to return. We ask that international students communicate with our student affairs office about travel plans and when they anticipate being able to get to campus. It is likely that boarding students will be invited back prior to day students, and that students requiring a COVID-19 test upon arrival will be invited back earlier in the week in order to ensure test results are back well ahead of classes beginning.

Monday, August 31 - Classes begin.

Finally, it remains the expectation of the school that all students will comply with our 14-day quarantine period and restrict activity to their homes and immediate family members beginning two weeks prior to their scheduled arrival date. As an update, Massachusetts guidelines currently allow for this quarantine period to be served in any New England state, New York, and New Jersey. Again, if this is not possible for you, we ask that you quarantine at home and come directly to school, adhering to all safety precautions while traveling.

Campus Life - We continue to be in conversation at school, while staying in close contact with public health advisories and peer school consortiums, in order to define community norms and a social contract we will be expecting of all community members spending time on campus. We have indicated that this will involve masks/face coverings in most indoor and some outdoor school spaces. We have also indicated that mask/face covering requirements will have much to do with our ability to adhere to physical distancing protocols through the day and evening. We are in ongoing conversation about the degree to which students will be under adult supervision beyond what is routine -- academic classes, afternoon programs, study hours, and required meetings. In general, the equation we are working with tells us that the more we limit activity outside of school, the greater our ability to approximate normal life on our campus will be.

In preparation for the return to campus, we are sending [this survey](#) with hope that you will complete it by Wednesday, July 29. In particular, we would like to begin to better understand the following:

1. The students who will be both eligible and able to take a COVID-19 test within one week of arriving at school.
2. The boarding students living in relatively close proximity to school who will be both able to and interested in moving their belongings into their dormitory room on an assigned date between Monday, August 17, and Friday, August 21.
3. Any family that is having trouble with our expectation that they will be able to

pick up their child within 24 hours of being notified of a need to do so for health or school closure reasons. We appreciate that making these arrangements is much more complicated for some of you than it is for others, and we want to help.

4. Any student who is feeling a need to start the school year in virtual mode for any reason.

Thanks in advance for completing this survey, which will allow us to move forward with plans in all of these areas.

Athletics and Afternoon Programs - We have been in steady conversation with Independent School League (ISL) member schools throughout the spring and summer about how best to approach the fall interscholastic athletic season with the health and safety of our communities squarely in mind. At this point, we have determined that we will not offer the traditional full slate of interscholastic games, nor will we crown league champions or confer league awards. We have not yet ruled out the prospect of some interscholastic competition happening during the fall season, and these arrangements will be left to the discretion of individual schools. We will share any and all updates to this plan as they materialize.

In place of a traditional fall interscholastic season, we have been hard at work developing a broad afternoon program that we will offer in its place. This program would involve a wide range of athletic and afternoon options for students, and would leverage the coaching talent and afternoon program expertise on our faculty. In particular, out-of-season ISL coach-athlete contact restrictions would be waived if we were in this model, and it is our plan to make fall, winter, and spring sports available to students wishing to train under the care of our coaches and in line with Massachusetts guidelines. While not the same as competing in the ISL, we do believe we will offer a robust athletic and afternoon program with options we are not traditionally able to offer in the fall, in particular, and in the afternoons, in general. Our students will be able to develop in areas they are passionate about. The particulars of this plan will take shape over the next four weeks.

Enrollment Status - While we continue to try to identify the safest and most mission-driven way to hold school on campus this fall, we also appreciate that you may have different comfort levels with what we eventually determine. Our gratitude for your confidence in the school by enrolling at Brooks for the 2020-2021 year means an enormous amount to us. It is possible that the current boarding and day options we have offered will need to be modified in some way over the next month. If that happens, we will work with you to select the mode that best suits you and your needs. While we cannot provide the level of certainty we would like at this time, we can and will provide as much choice and understanding as possible moving forward.

We look forward to talking with you about this letter and our current thinking about reopening during Thursday evening's webinar at 6:30 p.m. While rising infection rate levels in much of the country are concerning, we continue to pursue the goal of opening school in person in late August. Your questions have helped immensely, and we look forward to more tomorrow night.

Our next letter will go out Wednesday, August 5. If you have any questions at all between now and then, please let us know. Take good care.

Best,

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