



June 24, 2021

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians,

I hope all of you are doing well as summer begins to take hold and we continue to emerge from the pandemic with increasing confidence that an unrestricted beginning to the 2021-2022 school year will be within reach. It is incredibly exciting to be looking ahead to a whole school year full of opportunities to live and learn together without the cumbersome health and safety protocols we had to contend with in 2020-2021. While we will not have control over how public health circumstances might evolve over the next couple of months, we are determined to do all we can to ensure our ability to run our whole program when students begin arriving at school in early September. Thus, the headline of this letter is that we are on track to run school without restrictions in the coming year, and will stay that course unless we are compelled to operate differently.

Before proceeding with how we are approaching the year ahead in a number of different areas, I would like to do a couple of things with this initial communication to all of you who will be students, parents, and guardians in 2021-2022. First, I want to thank those of you who will be returning to Brooks for a second, third, or fourth year, and who have contributed so much to getting us through 2020-2021 successfully. While we certainly missed elements of school life we are all eager to experience again, we could not be more proud of how all in our community rallied to get so much out of a school year so full of impediments. Thank you. Second, I want to welcome all of you who are new students, parents, and guardians, to what is now your school, and express our enthusiasm for working with you, and coming to know you better, over the years ahead. I am sure all of you have been through a challenging year of your own, and we are so excited to shake free of COVID-19's grip with you. Our school is poised to run out of this pandemic and in the direction of so much we have missed and will appreciate more than ever before when we get started. In my view, there has never been a better time to come to Brooks!

2021-2022 Plans

As has been the case throughout the pandemic, it is possible, and even likely, that some of our plans for 2021-2022 will change. Yet, we head into the heart of this summer in a far more confident state than we did one year ago at this time. If all goes well, the unrestricted year we have in mind will hold together through July and August. Here is an initial look at where we are with our plans in a range of areas:

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement -- With increasingly compelling evidence underlining the extraordinary safety and efficacy of all three COVID-19 vaccinations now in hand, the school will require that all students and employees be fully vaccinated by Friday, August 20. This means that a second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, must be administered by this day. We were pleased to get a number of students vaccinated through the spring, and are already well on our way to realizing this goal. There will be a process to request a medical exemption in cases where a

doctor provides documentation as to the reason why a community member cannot be vaccinated. In addition, we appreciate that some in our community, particularly those of you living outside of the United States, may not have access to one of these three vaccines. In either case, we ask that you let us know as soon as you can to allow us time to consider exemption requests, and make arrangements to begin the vaccination process for unvaccinated students upon their arrival at school in September. We will share a more detailed vaccination policy in a separate mailing by the middle of July. If you have questions, [please let us know](#).

COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols -- There is no question that vaccination levels will have everything to do with the degree to which we are able to operate freely on our campus. Unless the Commonwealth of Massachusetts imposes restrictions we are required to comply with, all vaccinated community members will not be subject to any COVID-19 health and safety protocols. In an abundance of caution, we are currently planning to require those who will need to start the vaccination process upon arrival at school, or those who will be unvaccinated due to a medical exemption, to be tested twice per week until they are fully vaccinated, or until such time as we are reassured that testing is no longer necessary. In addition, all unvaccinated community members will be required to wear a mask over their nose and mouth when indoors. If you have questions about these protocols, [please let us know](#).

Fall and Early Winter Calendar -- We have made some adjustments to the initial 2021-2022 school calendar that we shared with all of you earlier in the year. This includes a decision to host all preseason athletics on campus beginning on Friday, September 3. Thus, all students who are invited to participate in preseason athletics should plan to arrive at school on this day. No students will be allowed to move to campus prior to Friday, September 3. We will then welcome the balance of the student body to campus over Labor Day weekend ahead of first semester classes beginning on Tuesday, September 7, with a gradual start in order to accommodate new and returning student orientation programs. In addition, we have moved our Family Weekend, which we are planning to hold in person and on campus, to Thursday, October 21, through Saturday, October 23. We will be in session in the fall through Saturday, November 20, when we will depart for Thanksgiving Break. From there, we are planning to be in person after Thanksgiving with boarding students returning to campus on Monday, November 29, and classes resuming in the morning on Tuesday, November 30. The first semester will end on Friday, December 17, when we will all depart for Winter Break. Boarding students will return to campus in the evening on Monday, January 3, 2022, with Winter Term scheduled to begin in the morning on Tuesday, January 4, 2022. We have provided links to information on [2021-2022 major dates](#), our [September arrival schedule](#), and some information that should help with making [arrival and departure plans](#) around major school breaks.

Academic Schedule -- We are thrilled to be returning to what will be an exclusively in-person and on-campus learning environment in 2021-2022. A faculty committee worked hard through the spring to consider survey results from students and teachers about schedule preferences and what we liked and disliked about the many pandemic schedules we employed. Needless to say, we have learned a great deal about how to teach and work with students over the past 15 months. We made every effort to include all perspectives in determining this post-pandemic schedule with the experiences we have had over the past 15 months in mind. [This document](#) includes the final product, our 2021-2022 daily schedule, with reference to both the core components and highlights of the plan. If you have any questions, please be in touch with Dean of Academic Affairs [Susanna Waters](#).

Student Life and Housing -- There will be a steady stream of information and updates that will come to all of you regarding student life and housing over the course of the summer. As of yet, we have not made final decisions in a number of areas that are likely to be of interest to all of you. It is our hope to have updated approaches for 2021-2022 by the first week of August. Here are some of the areas we are working on and thinking about:

- Dormitory Assignments -- We are in the process of considering and collecting housing preferences from returning and new students, respectively. Our plan is to make these decisions over the next month. As always, we will do our best to house students with both individual preferences and residential life goals in mind.
- Dress Code -- As most of you know, we have operated without a defined dress code since the pandemic began last March. We are planning on having a revised and updated dress code for 2021-2022 that will take into account a fair amount of student and adult feedback we have received over the course of the past year. There are, and will be, occasions when we will expect an elevated level of attire -- days when Chapel meets, for instance. Thus, it is likely that the dress code we settle on will have more than one standard and will attempt to have us in attire we determine to be appropriate for the day.
- Weekend Overnight Permissions -- We are planning to allow boarding students to again take weekend overnights in accordance with policies that will be updated in the Student Handbook. We will not be requiring all boarding students to stay on campus or restricting day student activity beyond campus -- with the possible exception of restrictions we may choose to require of unvaccinated students.
- Daily Off-Campus Permissions -- We did not allow any off-campus permissions during the school day throughout the 2020-2021 school year. While we have not made any final decisions about what we will allow in 2021-2022, we do envision a return to allowing off-campus permissions in some form when we get started again in the fall.

There will certainly be more to share as we get further into the summer and closer to the beginning of the school year. In all areas of school life, we are aiming to draw from the experience we have had through the pandemic in ways that will lead us to more informed and thoughtful decisions about how we would like to operate in 2021-2022. We look forward to staying in touch as all of this moves along.

Interscholastic Athletics and Afternoon Programs -- While all 16 members of the Independent School League (ISL) will be making plans for the fall with the best interests of their own communities squarely in mind, we are all hopeful that a traditional fall schedule of games at all levels will work out. Currently, we are preparing to begin the fall season of ISL competition on Saturday, September 25. We have every intention of participating fully in all fall sports and could not be happier about the prospect of having fall athletes competing interscholastically after missing this past season. As returning students and families know, we offered a wide range of additional afternoon programs throughout the year, and we are exploring ways to continue with some of those options in 2021-2022. In sum, we are preparing for full participation in fall interscholastic athletics with what we hope will be a broader set of afternoon program offerings than we had prior to the pandemic -- both are exciting developments!

Campus Projects -- As soon as the class of 2021 graduated on June 6, and after we made our way through final faculty meetings over the following week, the most disruptive phase of construction on the center of our campus got underway. As many of you know, we have been working on our new main entrance to campus since April, and that project is moving along nicely. It should be up and running by the time we begin school in the fall. In the center of campus, we have started the infrastructure phase of work associated with building a new admission office building, and are excited about fully pedestrianizing Main Street and the open spaces this project will create. All of this will gradually come into view over the course of the fall and the function and feel of the middle of campus will be transformed by the time these projects are completed next spring. We look forward to being on campus and with all of you as it takes shape!

As we head toward the end of June and the July 4th holiday, we hope you are able to slow down and enjoy some time with family and friends. After a full and demanding school year,

we are in need of some time for renewal, and the next couple of weeks will be quiet on campus. Unless there is an entirely unforeseen development, we will not be making any changes to our calendar or plans to begin the year in ways we have outlined in this letter prior to early August. In the meantime, we want to again encourage those of you who are not yet vaccinated to get that process started now. Please let us know if we can help in any way. We want to be positioned to hold school on campus with as few of the restrictions that were so difficult to navigate in 2020-2021 as possible. We can achieve that end if all who are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination complete the vaccination process by Friday, August 20.

While there may be reason to be in touch between now and then, we will look forward to providing a comprehensive 2021-2022 update in about six weeks. We are very much looking forward to being in person and with all of you as the pandemic continues to fade from view. Until then, take good care and have a great start to your summer.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School