



June 24, 2020

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

I write today to let all of you know that we will be welcoming students back to campus to begin the 2020-2021 school year. As proud as we are of the distance learning plan and level of engagement given to it by students and faculty this past spring, we are eager to be physically together at school. In many ways, we have come to appreciate more than ever before how much time spent on our campus matters to us. As we move ahead, our primary goals will be doing all we can to ensure our ability to be on campus safely and in a mode that feels like Brooks. We will stay this course as our preparation for the school year continues.

With what follows, I would like to provide the first in a series of scheduled communications through the summer sharing updated information covering all aspects of our reopening approach. Clearly, the health and safety of our community has been our first priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This will continue to be the case as we stay in close touch with local, state, national, and international public health guidelines. At the end of this letter, you will find the schedule for when we will be sending additional communications.

Our COVID-19 Task Force has been working on a reopening plan since late April. Their attention has been on five areas: Health and Safety, Academic Program, Campus Life and Afternoon Programs, Enrollment and Finance, and External Relations. As you know, this pandemic has been a fluid situation with rapidly evolving information and approaches to mitigating risk of infection in different parts of the country and world. This will continue. With much more to come over the balance of the summer, I would like to start by sharing how we are approaching calendar adjustments, physical campus modifications, and campus life considerations, as part of our effort to be ready to start the 2020-2021 school year safely and on campus.

Calendar - We have changed the 2020-2021 calendar in order to start school earlier and end in-person classroom instruction when we break for Thanksgiving. The campus will be closed from the beginning of Thanksgiving vacation on Saturday, November 21, until our return to school on Monday, January 4. The fall schedule will work, as follows:

Sunday, August 23 - Students will begin arriving at school no earlier than this date. With the exception of international students, who will be allowed to return at any point during this week, all students will be assigned a date for their return. Our expectation will be that every student begins a quarantine period 14 days prior to their scheduled

return to campus. This means limiting any close contact to family members and those currently living in a student's home. It is our preference that each student's quarantine period take place in Massachusetts. If that is not possible, we will ask students to adhere to these guidelines at their homes ahead of traveling directly to school on their scheduled date of return. If you have questions about your particular situation, please let us know.

Upon arrival, we will expect students to verify that they have completed 14 days of quarantine. At present, we are undecided as to whether we will require students and employees to take a COVID-19 test ahead of school opening. We are planning to ask for and expect full transparency from students and families regarding travel and any known COVID-19 exposure.

Monday, August 31 - Fall classes begin. We will share much more detail about our academic program in subsequent communications. Our hope is to have all students on campus to start school on this day, however, we will be prepared to work with in-person and remote students simultaneously throughout the year. Thus, any students who are not able to be on campus for either travel or health reasons will be able to begin school on time.

Saturday, November 21 - Fall classes end. We will break for Thanksgiving at this time and will not be returning to school on campus in December.

Saturday, November 21 through Monday, November 30 - Thanksgiving vacation

Tuesday, December 1 through Thursday, December 10 - Final assessments for all fall classes will be completed remotely.

Thursday, December 10 through Monday, January 4 - Winter vacation

Monday, January 4 - Students return from winter vacation and we continue with the 2020-2021 calendar, as currently scheduled.

We appreciate that circumstances may well change and require the school to move to an alternative approach in the second half of the year. However, we will not be making any change to the current 2021 portion of our schedule prior to October 15, 2020. In all 2021 scenarios, the health and safety of the community and our desire to be physically together on campus will continue to be our guiding principles. Thus, we will consider delaying our return beyond January 4, 2021, if doing so increases our ability to be on campus safely. We will not move to a distance learning plan for all students unless and until we have no alternative.

Physical Campus - We are blessed with a 270-acre campus and both substantial and best-in-class facilities that we can and will use creatively and innovatively to deliver on our mission. By virtue of canceling all summer programs, we have total access to facilities and spaces on campus we are thinking about modifying and using differently. This will include our health & wellness center, dining hall and student center, athletic center, some classrooms and dormitories, and outdoor spaces we want to be able to leverage and use for a range of academic, extra-curricular, and community purposes. In addition to wearing a face covering and practicing physical distancing, emerging data continues to suggest that the risk of contracting COVID-19 is substantially reduced when outdoors. It is also clear that proper ventilation is an important component of mitigating risk when indoors. We will have all of this in mind as we prepare the campus to be as safe as it can possibly be.

Campus Life - In addition to modifications we will make to the school's physical plant, the success of our return to school on campus will depend on our collective willingness to fully engage in practices that minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure for all students and employees who are together on campus. We will have a responsibility to one another to adhere to a set of community norms we will be defining with public health guidelines in mind, and sharing with all students, employees, and anyone who spends time on our campus. These community norms will alter patterns and routines for those of us who have experienced life at Brooks prior to the onset of this pandemic. They will require us to live differently with one another. Each of us will need to see ourselves as individual parts of a larger whole with a responsibility to contribute to the health and safety of others, and an opportunity to have a community experience unlike any the school has been pushed to have before. If we do our collective best to ensure we have a school year with one another on campus in the midst of challenging circumstances, we will feel a profound sense of pride and accomplishment in June. This needs to be our goal.

While there will be much more to share over the next eight weeks, I would like to offer some initial thoughts about two areas we have had questions about:

Boarding and Day Students - At present, we are not planning to require any student to alter their current enrollment status. Thus, the default assumption will be that current and incoming boarding students will live on campus in either a single or double room, and current and incoming day students will continue to commute to and from school -- in accord with the community norms we will establish. As noted, we will have the ability to serve students who need to be remote for either travel or health reasons.

Athletics/Afternoon Programs - As of this communication, we have not made any decision to curtail interscholastic athletics in the fall. We will remain in close contact with all members of the Independent School League (ISL) as we continue to contemplate whether interscholastic competition can happen safely when the year begins. If we are not able to compete interscholastically, we will run a full athletic and afternoon program on campus utilizing all of our facilities and coaching expertise on the school's faculty. We anticipate greater clarity about our approach to interscholastic athletics by August 1.

Enrollment Contracts - We will be issuing an addendum to existing enrollment contracts this week with an expectation that they be signed and back to the school by July 15, 2020. The contract will include language pertaining to COVID-19 and the addition of a virtual tuition rate in order to accommodate three potential scenarios: First, any student who cannot return to Brooks due to a travel restriction associated with COVID-19, or any other factor beyond the student's and family's control. Second, any student and family who have a health and safety concern the school, student, and family agree necessitates virtual status for a period of time. Third, if the school needs to pivot to a distance learning approach for all students due to an inability to hold school on campus. For all students attending school on campus as boarding or day students, our current boarding and day student rates for 2020-2021 will remain unchanged.

Communication Plan - What's below outlines our plan to be in touch with all of you on a regular basis going forward. We anticipate there will be updates to share in between these communications, and all of this information will be accessible on the [Returning to Campus page](#) on our website.

In addition to any new information we have to share regarding the calendar and modifications to the school's physical plant, each communication will provide current information regarding our progress and plan in these areas:

- **Health and Safety** - As noted, we are developing health and safety protocols that we will share with all of you as they come together. This will include further thought on our approach to COVID-19 testing, contact tracing approaches, physical distancing, personal hygiene, and our health and wellness center's readiness and plan to handle student wellbeing in partnership with the local medical community.
- **Academic Program** - We will outline how we plan to deliver our academic program in a model that can accommodate both in-person and remote students at the same time. This will include ways in which we will adhere to community norms in the classroom and academic spaces. In addition, we will be covering the daily and weekly academic schedule, chapel and school meeting, advisor meetings, tutoring approaches, how to support small group collaboration, and more.
- **Campus Life and Afternoon Programs** - We will be sharing community norms with all of you as they develop. These will pay particular attention to dormitory life, day student life, dining hall expectations, athletic team practices, art department afternoon programs, club and affinity group meetings, and more.

Our communication plan schedule will have us in touch with you on the dates below. In addition, we will be hosting webinars following each of these communications in order to allow students, parents, and guardians, to ask questions of key stakeholders here at school who are overseeing different aspects of our 2020-2021 preparation. You will hear from us on the following dates:

- Wednesday, July 8
- Wednesday, July 22
- Wednesday, August 5
- Wednesday, August 19

In the meantime, we appreciate that additional questions will emerge, and I want to be explicit about inviting you to reach out and ask those questions of us as they come up. This is uncharted territory for all of us, and the more we think together and work collaboratively, the better positioned we will be to start school safely and well in late August.

We look forward to seeing you in person and here on campus for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year. For now, enjoy the summer and take good care.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School

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