



January 13, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It was nice to get underway with classes this morning, and we are looking forward to the winter session that lies ahead. Our hope is that you and your children were able to enjoy the holiday season at a relaxing and restorative pace. With school now back in session, we wanted to be in touch with our next update regarding the winter, spring, and finish to the year. While there is still a fair amount that is unresolved about how we will navigate our way to June, we are prepared to move forward with plans to have both boarding and virtual students through this winter stretch. With what follows, we would like to share where we are as we move from our current all-virtual approach to a boarding/virtual model when intake testing begins on Sunday, January 24. All of you have been invited to a [webinar](#) we will be holding tomorrow evening at 7 p.m., and we are planning to elaborate on these plans and answer some of your [questions](#) then.

Winter Session

As you know, we made a decision in December to proceed with a boarding/virtual mode for the winter months. You are also likely aware that infection rates have remained alarmingly high over the past month. There is reason to believe these high rates will continue to be with us as we move from January to February. This has us revisiting safety protocols and risk mitigation strategies in an effort to do all we can to maintain community health. This thinking and planning will continue to evolve once we are on the ground with students attending school in person this winter, and we will share updates as we go. For now, it is extremely important that all winter boarding students engage in a quiet phase, with minimal interaction outside of their homes. We need to do all we can to be healthy when intake testing begins. With that in mind, here are some front-of-mind items:

Boarding/Virtual Breakdown - Many thanks to all of you for completing the form we circulated in December asking for your child's preference to board or attend school virtually. With all of those decisions now in hand, we will have roughly 70 percent (about 255) of our students attending school in person and 30 percent (about 110) attending virtually. With your help, and the help of our students, we learned a lot in the fall about working with boarding and virtual cohorts simultaneously. To do our best to put that learning to work on behalf of all of our students this winter is a primary goal.

COVID-19 Questionnaire - If you are the parent of a student who will be boarding during this winter session, please complete [this questionnaire](#) regarding any COVID-19 infection or exposure your child has had. Thank you for your help.

Intake Testing Protocol - We shared the plan and dates for our intake testing in our December letter. Those dates have not changed and can be found below. We will be testing employees who work on campus in a similar three-round process beginning ahead of the student intake testing. All of our tests will be administered by our Health and Wellness Center nursing staff and assessed by the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Mass. The plan to administer these tests will work as follows:

- **Sunday, January 24**: First test administration for all boarding students between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (select a testing time [HERE](#)). All boarding students living more than one hour from school will move on campus to quarantine. All boarding students living within one hour from school will be expected to quarantine at home.
- **Wednesday, January 27**: Second test administration for all boarding students between 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. (select a testing time [HERE](#)). All students who are in quarantine at home will be permitted to move on campus at assigned times on either Saturday, January 30, or Sunday, January 31, following a second negative test result.
- **Monday, February 1**: Third test administration for all boarding students who will be on campus by this time.

You can learn more about the particulars of our intake testing protocol [HERE](#). If you have questions, please let us know.

Quarantine Expectations - Given the high infection rates we are experiencing nationally, regionally, and locally, it is extremely important that we are rigorous in our effort to quarantine and minimize any interaction outside of one's home ahead of intake testing beginning on Sunday, January 24. Once testing has begun, students quarantining on campus will be expected to isolate in their rooms (only one student per room during this quarantine period), stagger bathroom visits, practice good hygiene, have no close contact with others, and follow school protocols. For students who are quarantining at home, the expectation will be much the same: namely, remain in your home with no close contacts beyond immediate family members. The more we do now, and all the way through our intake testing week, the better the odds are that we will experience fewer positive results with less contact-tracing disruption. While we are hoping to not have any positive test results, we will be prepared to handle them. You can learn more about our Health and Wellness Center protocols [HERE](#).

School During Intake Testing Week - While we will have students on campus during this week, we will remain in an all-virtual mode through Monday, February 1, when the third round of intake testing takes place. While this will depend substantially on how our intake testing goes, it is our plan to move to in-person classes and afternoon programs during this week. We will continue testing all in-person community members on a weekly basis through this winter session. The results of those tests will have much to do with the mode we operate in on campus throughout February. In sum, our vigilance in adhering to all safety protocols will play an enormous role in ensuring community health.

Campus Life - We know from our experience in the fall that a good portion of how our life and interaction together on campus will work is hard to pin down ahead of time. We know that public health circumstances and colder weather will add challenges this winter. We also know that we will be physically together for considerably less time than we were in the fall. Thus, we are planning to hunker down a bit more than we did between September and November. While we will allow students to order food for delivery from Door Dash and the like during specified times, we will not have a drop-

off location as we did in the fall. In addition, we are not going to host any parent visiting hours on Sunday afternoons. If all goes well, we will be together for slightly more than five weeks and want to do everything we can to keep contact of any kind from outside of the campus to a bare minimum. In so doing, we will be able to achieve a relative degree of confidence with on-campus interaction with one another once we are through our intake testing.

Virtual Life - A series of conversations we had with students towards the end of the first semester were extremely helpful in thinking about steps we could take to ensure a stronger sense of connection to school life while attending remotely. In addition to working to improve both hybrid technology and best practices for teaching in that mode, we are planning to have routine openings for virtual students to check in with folks at school. We are also hopeful that student activities and afternoon programs will be accessible to virtual students who are interested. While we cannot overcome the physical distance and separation, we can and will work hard at staying in touch and doing what we can to reach and include all of our students.

Saturday, February 27 - Saturday, March 6 - As indicated in December, we will stagger the departure of all boarding students for Spring Break during this week. We will continue to run classes and offer afternoon programs as students gradually depart campus for home.

Afternoon Programs - While we are disappointed to not be in position to compete interscholastically, we are going to offer a robust afternoon program with all of our standard winter athletic and afternoon offerings. In addition, there will be a number of two-day options for students to choose if they would prefer not to be involved in a traditional winter activity six days each week. We are planning to keep Anna K. Trustey Memorial Field clear of snow, and we will do all we can to maximize outdoor opportunities on our 270-acre campus -- including an outdoor skating area that has been set up on the tennis courts. We are continuing to develop this plan and will share the options with students as we approach intake testing. It is our tentative plan to begin afternoon programs shortly after our intake testing protocol comes to a close on February 1.

Spring Break - There is no change to our plan to take this break, as scheduled, between Saturday, March 6, and Wednesday, March 24. As a reminder, we do want to be in touch with any student (and family) who does not have a place to go during this break. Please reach out to [Associate Head for Student Affairs Andrea Heinze](#) if you are in need of help for housing during Spring Break.

Spring Session

We will resume second semester classes following Spring Break on Thursday, March 25. While we have not yet determined when we will resume in-person school in the spring, we are still planning to operate in a boarding/day/virtual mode once we do. We will update this plan by the middle of February.

There are still a number of loose ends to the spring, and we need more time to think through how we will finish the year. We know we will be in second-semester classes from late March into the middle of May. We are planning to be on campus for the balance of the spring. We are not yet certain about how the year will finish and are continuing to think about the following:

Winter Term in the Spring - We are all missing Winter Term as we move through January and a time when we would ordinarily be engaged in classes and activities we

enjoy a great deal. It remains our hope that something fun, immersive, communal, and educational might be within reach in May, and serve as a different way to finish what will have been a hard year by any measure. We anticipate developing these plans further over these winter months.

Lawn Ceremony and Prize Day - While we still have not moved from the current schedule of holding our Lawn Ceremony on Sunday, May 30, and Prize Day on Monday, May 31, we are prepared to do so if this allows for a safer in-person event. We are hoping the country and region will be in a significantly better place with COVID-19 infection rates by May, and that vaccination efforts will have gained traction by then. We very much want family members to be able to attend Prize Day for members of the class of 2021. We are not sure how many people will be able to attend these events, however, and this will have considerable bearing on how we proceed. Our plan is to move along this thinking over the next month in conjunction with our thinking about a spring version of Winter Term to finish the year.

I suspect I am not alone in hoping and believing that our ability to safely interact with one another in person will gradually increase over the course of 2021. In the meantime, we have a challenging winter full of opportunity ahead of us. To do well with this winter will require a group effort and close attention paid to safety protocols and risk mitigation strategies intended to keep us safe. We are glad to be underway and are excited about taking on the winter and delivering on our mission along the way. We are looking forward to a terrific seven-plus weeks.

Thank you for all the help and support you continue to share with the school. We will stay in touch as we move along and update our plans for the balance of the year in early February. For now, take good care.

Best,

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