



December 15, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

With first semester classes now complete, we are working in the direction of preparing final grades and advisor reports by the end of the week. Our hope is that these first few days of winter vacation have been restful ones for your children after all of them worked so hard and so well throughout the fall. As we close in on the holidays and a chance to recharge for what awaits us in the second half of the year, we wanted to take this opportunity to update what we shared with all of you on November 16. While it is possible circumstances beyond our control may have some impact on our return to school for the second semester in January, we do want to share how we are planning to proceed in 2021. We will hold a webinar on Thursday, December 17, at 7 p.m., and will look forward to saying more about what follows when we are with you then.

WINTER SESSION - In November, we shared three potential modes for the winter session running from Wednesday, January 13, through Saturday, March 6. At the time, we were concerned about alarming increases in COVID-19 infection rates. Unfortunately, infection rates have not improved over the past month, and public health agencies and experts indicate we are not likely to see a significant change for the better over the course of the next couple of months. Thus, we are going to continue with the boarding/virtual mode we were in during the fall and not allow students to commute to and from school. As was the case in the fall, all students will be able to choose the mode that works best for them. We received initial boarding or virtual preferences from most of you subsequent to our November 16 letter. While not complete, these initial preferences indicated a comparable winter session boarding (80%) and virtual (20%) breakdown in comparison to the fall. At this point, we will be asking all of you to update your preference by Tuesday, December 22. Please complete [THIS FORM](#), which asks whether you would like to attend as a boarding or virtual student. The form also asks for travel information from those of you who will be boarding during the winter session. You can access quarantine expectations for those entering Massachusetts [HERE](#). It will continue to be our expectation that all students will have a place to go within 24 hours of being notified if our testing and contact tracing protocols determine a need to quarantine, or in the event that the school needs to close for some reason. We appreciate you may have questions ahead of making a final decision by Tuesday of next week. Please be in touch with us directly in that case.

While there is work still to do in thinking through safety protocols for the winter months, we have and will continue to engage students and adults in that thinking. We are confident we can achieve both a substantial safety standard and a fun and full experience for all who choose to attend school in person during this nearly six-week stretch of time. While we are not in position this year to operate in ways that we were

accustomed to prior to the pandemic, we have certainly experienced the value of having students living and learning together on campus. We are intent on maximizing the use of our campus and facilities in a manner that allows us to continue to have a safe, fun, and fulfilling experience. We will have more to share as we amend our social contract with the winter months in mind over the course of the next month. As was the case in the fall, we will not know exactly how life on campus will work in the winter until we are living with one another, emphasizing safety, and finding ways to enjoy the winter season together.

As the first semester drew to a close, we were glad to have some opportunities to talk with students who attended virtually in the fall about their experience. In addition, we were glad to have occasions throughout the fall to connect with many of you who are parents of children who attended virtually. As a result, we have an improved sense of how to work more effectively with students in and out of the classroom as they attend school from home. While there are certain and unavoidable differences between attending school in person and attending school online, we do believe we will be better positioned to foster connection and community with virtual students during the winter session due in large part to what we have learned to this point.

We understand that making a decision between attending as either a boarding or virtual student is difficult for many and wish we were not in this position. We also wish and yearn for the day when moving freely to and from campus will not carry health risks of the sort we have been navigating for the past nine months. Ultimately, we believe our experience in a boarding/virtual mode this fall gives us a foundation upon which to build and improve the student experience both residentially and remotely at what seems likely to be the most challenging phase in the pandemic. Regardless of the mode you choose, we are determined to provide an excellent experience for all of our students through the winter session. Again, we will be glad to answer your questions as we continue moving forward.

Here is how the winter will play out:

Wednesday, January 13 - Second semester classes will begin in an all-virtual mode. We will ask that an off-campus quarantine phase begin for all students planning to board during winter session on this date.

Intake Testing Protocol - We will begin an intake testing protocol that will involve three rounds of testing for all students choosing to board during the winter session. Our surveillance testing throughout the fall was done by the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and we consistently received testing results within 24-36 hours of administration. Our current thinking is to administer intake testing as follows:

- **Sunday, January 24** - First test administration on campus for all boarding students, followed by a quarantine period on campus for all who live more than one hour from school. All other boarding students will be expected to quarantine at home.
- **Wednesday, January 27** - Second test administration for all boarding students, followed by a continuation of the quarantine period on campus and at home. All students who are in quarantine at home will be permitted to move to campus 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 on campus. We will move gradually from a virtual mode to an in-person mode once we receive test results from this final round of intake testing.

When we are through the intake testing period, we will be testing all community members on a weekly basis until we depart for Spring Break on Saturday, March 6. You can access all testing information for our winter session [HERE](#).

Saturday, February 27 - Saturday, March 6 - As we did ahead of Thanksgiving Break, we will stagger the departure of all boarding students for Spring Break during this week.

Winter Interscholastic Athletics and Afternoon Programs - Unfortunately, we are not going to be in position to participate in interscholastic athletics or any off-campus programs during the winter session. As was the case in the fall, all students attending school in person will be restricted to campus for the duration of this winter session. We do not take these steps lightly. Ultimately, it is our view that allowing students to come and go on a daily basis compromises our ability to maintain a sufficient safety standard for those living on campus and with the school serving in loco parentis. We know how disappointing this news is to winter athletes and coaches and are very sorry to be in this position. As was the case in the fall, we will be running a winter afternoon program that will be comparable in form and structure to what we offered in the fall - lots of choices, flexibility, excellent coaching, and access to more than just winter sport offerings.

Winter Academic Plan - We shared our Continuous Learning Plan for the winter session in last week's parent newsletter. You can also access it [HERE](#), and we will have more to share about this plan and any questions you have about it during Thursday evening's webinar.

Winter Session Tuition Adjustments - We anticipate some boarding students may opt to attend school virtually in the winter. In addition, all day students will need to choose to attend as either a boarding student or virtual student. In terms of tuition adjustments, this will work, as follows:

- Boarding student choosing to attend virtually in the winter - \$4,900 credit
- Day student choosing to attend virtually in the winter - \$1,500 credit
- Day student choosing to attend as a boarding student in the winter - \$2,135 fee

As was the case in the fall, financial aid will be available to any student and family who have demonstrated need and would like to move from day to boarding status for the winter session.

Spring Break - As we indicated in November, we will take this break, as originally scheduled, between Saturday, March 6, and Wednesday, March 24. We appreciate that this gap in the school year creates travel challenges for some number of our students. Thus, we will work with all students and families in such circumstances and will either arrange for a homestay, partner with an outside organization experienced in housing students during breaks, or allow these students to remain on campus. In sum, we will make sure that any student who does not have a place to go is safely housed on or off campus between Saturday, March 6, and Wednesday, March 24. Please reach out to [Associate Head for Student Affairs Andrea Heinze](#) if you are planning to board and need help with housing during Spring Break.

SPRING SESSION - As we indicated in November, second semester classes will resume on Thursday, March 25. While we do feel a need to continue with our boarding/virtual mode for the winter session, we do not plan to continue with this mode when we return from Spring Break. While the particulars of in-person school in

the spring are still to be determined, we fully expect to be holding school on campus and will be making plans to operate with boarding, day, and virtual students. We will have more to share about our thinking with regard to the spring during Thursday evening's webinar, and will update this thinking as we move further into the winter months. For now, we wanted to share our plan to be in a boarding/day/virtual mode to finish the year.

Winter Term in the Spring - While we have not yet developed what we might be able to offer in May as a sort of Winter Term equivalent, we are continuing to hold onto the possibility of finishing the school year with a short term of this sort. We will continue to explore the possibilities and will share updates to this thinking as the winter evolves.

Lawn Ceremony and Prize Day - We have not yet made any changes to the currently scheduled dates for these two culminating events on Sunday, May 30, and Monday, May 31. However, we are anticipating that a typical graduation weekend with back-to-back events under a tent with hundreds of people attending may not be within reach. In that case, we may move the dates to allow for safe in-person attendance that complies with Massachusetts safety protocols. We will update our thinking about graduation weekend in January.

As this extremely challenging year continues to churn along, we are encouraged to know that the first rounds of COVID-19 vaccinations are underway. While it will be some time before this vaccine is widely available, it does give us hope that conditions will steadily improve once we are through the heart of the winter and heading for the spring. We will continue to monitor all public health advisories over the course of the next month and will be in touch again during the week when second semester classes begin ahead of boarding students returning to campus on January 24.

Before closing, I want to thank you for the kind and thoughtful notes you shared with the school and so many faculty and staff members who worked with your children throughout the fall. We are looking forward to doing our very best to build on what we were able to do in the fall and have a safe and fulfilling winter session. Your support and partnership continues to mean a great deal to us.

Take good care and have a safe and joyful holiday season.

Best,

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