



March 11, 2020

Dear Parents,

As we move towards the end of our first week of Spring Break after wrapping up the third marking period this past Saturday, I want to begin this letter with an update regarding our approach to the novel coronavirus (COVID - 19). As this public health challenge continues to evolve, we are staying in close touch with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and many other independent schools confronting the same challenges. In addition, our crisis management team is in touch daily about the rapidly changing circumstances we are all confronting.

We are and will continue to act with an abundance of caution in order to do everything we can to ensure the health and safety of our community. We are also approaching each difficult decision we make that alters or curtails school programming in a gradual manner. We will stay this course moving forward and plan to be in regular contact with the whole community as we reach points in time when decisions need to be made. As always, we welcome your questions and concerns.

To begin, I want to indicate that we will have a more comprehensive update regarding our post-Spring Break plan on Wednesday, March 18 -- one week prior to our scheduled return to school on Wednesday, March 25. Between now and next Wednesday, we intend to stay in touch with all of the aforementioned local, state, and federal government health agencies, along with a range of peer school consortiums offering thought and advice about the safest ways to proceed. Our goal is to make each decision in as informed a manner as possible.

In terms of how our approach has evolved since my last letter to parents, I offer the following:

- We have not yet made a decision on whether we will return to school on Wednesday, March 25. We are putting plans in place to continue academic work remotely if we do not return to school, as scheduled. We will make a final decision on Wednesday, March 18, and will share that news as part of a comprehensive update.
- Earlier this week, we made the decision to cancel all spring athletic trips that had not yet departed. Our crew teams will complete their preseason trip to South Carolina on Saturday of this week.
- We have decided to cancel both the Community Appreciation Lunch scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, and Grandparents and Special Friends Day on

Saturday, April 18.

- We have not yet made a decision on whether we will hold admission revisit days on Friday, April 3, and Tuesday, April 7. Here, too, we will make a final decision by Wednesday, March 18.
- We continue to appreciate your help updating this [FORM](#) with all of your travel information including where you have traveled in the U.S. -- the more specific you are, the better. For those who are traveling, we continue to strongly advise against any travel to "Level 2" (currently Japan) or "Level 3" (currently China, Iran, Italy, South Korea) destinations. We will require a 14-day self-quarantine period for any member of our community who travels to or through any of these countries. As a reminder, we will not be equipped to host students on campus in need of self-quarantine. Please continue to monitor this [CDC Link](#) in order to stay up to date.
- We are canceling events that had been scheduled to be held here on campus during the break, and will be suspending indefinitely all spring rental agreements with outside groups who use our facilities. We are planning to limit large gatherings on campus and adhere to social-distancing guidelines in order to minimize risk. We will share a more detailed approach with all of you in our next letter on Wednesday, March 18.
- We have stocked our Health & Wellness Center and dining hall with appropriate medical supplies and extra food, respectively, in order to be better equipped for a range of potential scenarios in the spring.
- We are moving forward with plans to thoroughly clean the campus ahead of our scheduled return to school on Wednesday, March 25.
- We will continue to emphasize the importance of practicing good hygiene: washing hands regularly, covering our coughs, and doing all we can to reduce the risk of spreading illness.
- We continue to ask all members of the community who are not feeling well to stay home.

While it is difficult to pivot from such weighty circumstances and so many unknowns to all we have done and hope to still do this spring, I do not want to close this letter without highlighting the following:

- By the end of this week, you all will be able to access your child's comments and grades via OnBrooks. Let us know if we can be of help if you have difficulty doing so.
- Congratulations are in order for our teams that played so well in New England tournament action last week. Our girls hockey team earned the #2 seed and competed heroically against Cushing Academy in a semi-final game this past Saturday. Our boys basketball team earned the #1 seed and beat both Governor's Academy and St. Luke's (CT) to reach the final against Canterbury School this past Sunday. And, our girls basketball team also earned the #1 seed and beat Cushing Academy in the quarter-final, Proctor Academy in the semi-final (that included a buzzer-beating 3-point shot from Taina Mair '22 to secure a one-point victory), and St. Luke's (CT) in the final this past Sunday to win the New England championship! All three teams have an enormous amount to be proud of.
- Beauty and the Beast was a huge hit in late February with four wonderful shows. It was great to have huge crowds in attendance enjoying so many terrific performances. Congratulations to the entire company!
- Our "epic" Head of School holiday was certainly a lot of fun for the Head of School, and I hope it provided a brief break for students and teachers ahead of the final push to the end of the third marking period last week.

- Thanks to a number of you who joined the faculty for Ashley Hall's presentation on the danger and pervasiveness of vaping amongst adolescents. We recorded Ms. Hall's talk and you can access it [HERE](#) if you have not had a chance to watch it.
- We were glad to have Jim Sperber '87 on campus to share his exhibit, Directions, in the Robert Lehman Art Center, and work with students in a series of visual art classrooms during the last week of February. He was terrific and all involved seemed to have lots of fun -- and produced a stunning piece of art now on display in the Lehman!
- Our Boston Reception last week was a lot of fun with faculty members Doug Burbank, Leigh Perkins, Lillian Miller, Randy Hesse, and Michele Musto all sharing some thought on why they teach what they teach with a number of alums and parents assembled. All of them are exceptional teachers and it was so great to have them share their talent and passion in the manner that they did. A big hit!

I wish I was not writing with so much uncertainty in the air about how the remainder of the school year will unfold. As always, we are committed to do everything we can to take exceptionally good care of your children and this will guide our thinking as we move from decision to decision. I will look forward to being in touch again on Wednesday, March 18, with as clear and certain a path forward as we can provide at that time. If you have questions between now and then, please be in touch.

For now, take good care and I hope you all are able to enjoy some time with your children during the break.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School

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