

Dear Wildcat Community,

As the semester winds down and the holidays approach, it is important to take stock of where we are with our infection rates, mitigation strategies, and protocols related to the pandemic.

First, many thanks go to each of you for taking care to follow mask-wearing, hand-washing, and distancing guidelines even when you were away from school over the Thanksgiving break. Each of your efforts make a difference in the health and safety of our community! If you have looked at our new [Active Case Dashboard](#), you can see just how fortunate we are. It is a direct result of the care and sacrifice each of you has made. Please also note that this dashboard will be the way we communicate active cases across the school going forward. Division Heads will alert the families within their division of active cases via email and impacted individuals through email and phone calls.

As we enter the Christmas holidays, your continued vigilance is imperative. Without a doubt, there are strong desires to spend time in social situations outside of school. We all crave that sense of connection and normalcy. However, we need to take the same degree of care away from school as we do while we are at school—limiting exposure to groups, socializing outside and at a distance, remaining mindful of our distance from others (especially while eating and drinking), and carefully tending to hand hygiene and mask-wearing. There is a very high risk that we will not come out of the Christmas holidays as fortunate as we have been coming out of the Thanksgiving holidays, and we do not want to disrupt our opportunity to be on campus, together.

In response to this potential risk, several schools in the area and many across the country are either currently 100% virtual or have planned to begin the new year 100% virtually. Others, like us, feel that we can begin the second semester in-person safely. To do so, we must control the infection within our student and faculty communities over the next few weeks. Your efforts are essential so please make your plans accordingly.

It is also important for you to keep the following in mind:

- **Continue to Notify:** Notify your child's Division Head and Nurse Lenna of exposures and positive test results over the holiday break. You can easily do that with our [COVID-19 Reporting Form](#) or email. While the School won't be updating the Active Case Dashboard during the holiday break, it is essential that you still use the form to notify us so we can continue to be aware of infections, exposures, and quarantine within our community.
- **Going Virtual:** If you are interested in beginning the second semester virtually for health and safety reasons, please alert your child's Division Head by noon next Wednesday so that we can gather any supplies for them. Typically, we have asked families to commit to two weeks of virtual instruction, but in this case, we will gladly have families choose to go virtual for the first week of the second semester (January 5-8).
- **Updated Quarantine Guidelines:** As you may have heard, the CDC has updated its guidance regarding the length of quarantine and the use of testing. After consulting with our medical panel, we will implement them in the following ways:
 - We will continue to remind our community that the recommendation of the CDC for those who have close contact with a test-positive person continues to be 14 days.
 - In situations in which strict mitigation strategies can be maintained, the close contact can return to those activities under the following conditions:

1. After seven days, the individual remains symptom free AND has received a negative result from a PCR test sample taken on Day 6 or later,

OR

2. After ten days the individual remains symptom-free

NOTE: If strict mitigation strategies cannot be maintained, a close contact may not resume those activities until the end of the standard 14-day quarantine period.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,

David B. Perkinson
Head of School