



HEAD OF  
SCHOOL

Dear Governor's Community,

We are living in an extraordinary time. I have been in the field of education for 30 years and never have I seen or even contemplated the kinds of situations that we are being forced to anticipate given the rapid spread of COVID-19. Who could have imagined just a short time ago that colleges and universities would be moving all instruction online for the remainder of the spring term, that NESCAC schools and the Ivy League would cancel their spring athletic seasons, and that professional sports organizations would be suspending play? And yet, with the World Health Organization declaring COVID-19 a global pandemic, Governor Charlie Baker declaring a state of emergency in Massachusetts, and serious restrictions being placed on global travel, we are forced to imagine how we can continue to fulfill our two most basic responsibilities--to provide a high quality educational experience for our students, and to look out for the health and well-being of all members of our school community--under increasingly challenging and unpredictable circumstances.

As promised in my email yesterday, I write today to share a plan that will guide us through the next several weeks as we continue to meet regularly and assess our options for the spring semester. The Crisis Management Team has been closely following news and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and a range of independent school consortiums to develop a plan that we believe protects the integrity of our academic program and keeps our community safe. My fervent hope is that we will, as soon as possible, all be together on campus in Byfield relishing the friendships that make the Academy a place that students, faculty, staff, and our families have been proud to call home. For the next few weeks, however, I am afraid that we will have to remain apart.

### **Academics/Co-curricular programs**

We are extending March break for students by one week to Monday, March 30. Faculty will return from March break on Monday, March 23 and use that week to prepare online lessons. We are currently planning to have a two-week period of distance learning from Monday, March 30 to Friday, April 10. We have decided to extend the third quarter from Friday, April 3 to Friday, April 10. We will provide more details on how distance learning will work as we get closer to March 30. Students who are concerned about access to internet or computer use during the two-week distance learning unit should be in touch with [Mr. Mandel](#). In early April we will reassess the situation and determine whether we can foresee a time when we will be able to resume normal operations on campus.

The Afternoon Program will be suspended for as long as we are offering distance learning. Please feel free to address questions about the Afternoon Program to [Mrs. Barcomb](#).

The College Counseling Office (CCO) is developing a plan to continue individual meetings with juniors as well as the *College Search Seminar Series* online. Seniors are invited to email their College Counselor at any point and are, of course, encouraged to schedule phone conversations as necessary.

### **Residential Life**

It is our expectation that students will remain off campus for the additional week of March break (Monday, March 23 to Monday, March 30) and the two-week distance learning period (Monday, March 30 to Friday, April 10). We understand that some students may need help in finding accommodations for this period, particularly our international students, and the Dean's Office is prepared to work with families to determine housing needs for these students. The Dean's Office will send a follow-up email later today to international families to check in on the plans for individual students. If anyone else needs assistance determining accommodations during this time, please be in touch with [Mr. Wartman](#).

Mr. Wartman will communicate with boarding students next week about the logistics of retrieving items from dormitory rooms in the coming days. If you have a more immediate need, please be in touch with [Mr. Wartman](#) directly.

### **Health Center**

Students feeling upset or in need of emotional support during this time should reach out to the Health Center, ([kfyrberg@govsacademy.org](mailto:kfyrberg@govsacademy.org)), Counseling Center ([eruhl@govsacademy.org](mailto:eruhl@govsacademy.org) or [ctebbens@govsacademy.org](mailto:ctebbens@govsacademy.org)), or the Deans' Team ([deansoffice@govsacademy.org](mailto:deansoffice@govsacademy.org)).

### **Access to Campus**

For the remainder of March break and for the period when we are conducting classes online we will be restricting access to campus for all students and guests. The library, dining hall, and athletic facilities will not be available. If for some reason you feel that you need to come to campus, please contact [Mr. Wartman](#) to seek permission and make arrangements in advance.

We will use this period to continue the deep cleaning of campus that began at the start of March break to ensure that we are prepared to re-open as soon as that opportunity presents itself.

### **Academy Employees**

While we are extending the March break for students, the Academy will be operating on a normal schedule starting on Monday, March 23, and employees should plan to report to work as regularly

scheduled until further notice. Where changes in normal operating schedules are necessary, supervisors will communicate alternate plans next week. We will develop protocols that allow us to practice social distancing while maintaining operations as normally as we possibly can. Employees can expect to hear from their manager or Department Head about specific practices to be followed in each department.

If you or a family member are not feeling well, please let your manager know. Consistent with CDC recommendations, employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours. Employees who have special concerns related to COVID-19 risk factors, such as underlying health conditions or age, should contact Yvonne Abenante to develop a plan that will lower their risk of infection. We expect that any members of the Academy community who have been in Europe since the outbreak there (or in any area rated level 1, 2, or 3 by the CDC) will follow the recommendations of the CDC for self-isolation before returning to campus to protect the health of the Academy community.

Members of the Crisis Management Team will be meeting next week to review employee processes, policies and protocols regarding the continued operation of the Academy. We are taking precautions on campus including additional cleaning and making disinfecting supplies available. All Academy-related business travel should be postponed. If you have any questions, please be in touch with [Yvonne Abenante](#).

I often think that the true character of our community shines through most brightly when we come together in the face of adversity. The great challenge of this particular crisis is that we will have to find our way forward without being able to be together in person to weather the storm. At this point we cannot know what the weeks ahead will bring, other than to say that it will not be the spring that any of us would have chosen, especially our seniors. Please reach out to me or other members of the faculty and staff as you have questions or concerns. This situation is evolving quickly, and while dozens of people are working hard to make the next few weeks go as smoothly as possible, there will inevitably be bumps in the road. I want to thank all of you in advance for your patience and flexibility as work through this difficult time.

My Best,  
Peter

Peter H. Quimby, Ph.D. '85, P'14  
Head of School

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