



Message from the Head of School

Date Sent: Monday, Aug 16 at 5:35 PM

Dear Belmont Hill Parents,

Greetings once again from campus, and I trust that you continue to enjoy these wonderful August days. While I had hoped this letter would not have to be quite so focused on the pandemic, it feels important to provide an update on our latest developments from recent weeks. We have been in close communication with many additional medical consultants as well as our military pandemic planners, and we are tracking all state, federal, and town guidance closely. We find ourselves in a place where the CDC and Belmont Board of Health guidance is in one place on indoor masking for vaccinated students while state guidance, as well as a number of our consultants, are in a different place. We are going to give ourselves at least another week before making a final decision on our masking and lunch approach to start the year given this rapidly evolving landscape. Rest assured that we have multiple contingency plans in place, as you would expect. We feel ready and prepared to deliver a year on campus that will be far more robust than last year. There are so many exciting ways in which the upcoming year will be more connected, uplifting, and joyful.

We are now expecting the Delta variant surge to be peaking later in September with the hope that it will subside as we enter October. Thus it feels more likely than a few weeks ago that we will need to mask indoors universally to begin the year, while also implementing a modified box lunch program that will de-densify our traditional community dining experience. We are considering alternative approaches to our Camp Cody trip for our seniors, which is our only planned overnight trip to start the year. However, we remain committed to removing indoor masking for vaccinated boys as soon as it is safe to do so, as we fully acknowledge the toll this takes on them from a mental health and social perspective. We also want to leverage the wonderfully high vaccination rate in our community, while acknowledging that Belmont Hill families and teachers may have other people at home who cannot be vaccinated based on age or other concerns.

We are happy to report that we expect our student population to be approximately 95% vaccinated to start the year, and we hope this may grow even higher in the days ahead. The reality is that unvaccinated students and families will face a number of different requirements based on the existing landscape. We have stopped short of requiring the vaccine now based on its current status as FDA emergency approval. However, we expect at least some vaccines will be fully approved this fall by the FDA, at which point we intend to require the vaccine over a period of time for all students. During this interim period, it will be important for our small number of unvaccinated students and families to understand what will be required of them.

1. We continue to expect that unvaccinated students will need to mask indoors for the entire school year as per current state guidelines.
2. Unvaccinated students will need to utilize alternative lunch seating arrangements when indoors to maintain a full six feet of distance.
3. As has been communicated in June and late July, unvaccinated students will need to provide a weekly negative PCR COVID test to the Health Office to remain on campus. The School does not expect to provide a regular weekly testing regimen throughout the year, so this will generally be at the expense of the family. Financial aid students who are in this category are welcome to reach out to our Director of Financial Aid if there is a need for additional financial support for testing.
4. *****Please note that it has now become clear within the past few days that some schools in the ISL will NOT allow unvaccinated players to participate in interscholastic competitions. We do not know the exact number of schools that will follow this policy. All ISL schools will likely require testing within 48 hours of competition for unvaccinated students, and this would again need to be managed by individual families. We now know that the only way to ensure a complete season of ISL competition for your son will be vaccination.**

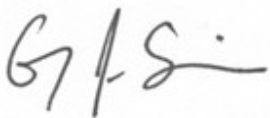
It is also important to restate that our goal for the year is risk mitigation, but we cannot eliminate risk from COVID-19 and run a school year in person. We are aware that some families have higher risk factors than others, yet we believe that we are in a much stronger place than a year ago given the realities of

vaccines in our community. We expect to have some isolated positive cases throughout the fall from both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. Furthermore, once the Delta variant runs its course in Massachusetts, COVID-19 will still be with us in some form. We need to remain nimble and thoughtful about taking action on a continuum of risk mitigation that balances safety with the quality of the school experience over time.

While we do not expect to have a regular surveillance testing program this year at this time, we are planning to baseline test our community to begin the year as part of Acclimation and Orientation. More details about this process as well as contact tracing expectations for vaccinated and unvaccinated students will follow in the coming weeks. We will have a webpage available with all relevant information before the School year begins. Additionally, we have attached a copy of our new remote learning approach, which reflects our desire to continue supporting boys who need to be home for legitimate health reasons while not asking our faculty to teach in a hybrid environment. Our focus this year is squarely upon delivering the highest quality in-person instruction possible.

Getting back to normal will be the key goal of this year, but we certainly do not take this challenge lightly. We will continue to prioritize safety while remaining aware and flexible in regard to the evolving landscape around us. We remain focused on the health and well-being of your sons, as we continue to emphasize notions of joy and brotherhood across campus. That said, we are equally excited about the return of needed routine, structure, and predictability in their lives. I suspect that we will all cherish this year in unique ways together, and I look forward to seeing all of you back on campus this year as well.

As always, thank you for your remarkable support of Belmont Hill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GJS', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Gregory J. Schneider

Ronald M. Druker '62 Head of School

Belmont Hill School Remote Learning Policy

Remote learning will be an option for students in the following, approved situations:

- An accommodation related to COVID-19 quarantine/isolation protocols;
- An absence due to a planned medical procedure or essential family matter;
- An absence due to illness that will extend beyond two class days.

In each case, parents should speak with their son's Division Director for guidance as well as the Health Office in the case of extended sickness. Our ability to provide remote learning in the post pandemic norm is limited and lead time is required for set up. As such, please communicate as proactively as possible and note that we cannot accommodate boys missing school for athletic reasons.