

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

December 31, 2021

Dear Parents,

I hope you have been enjoying your Christmas break and wanted to provide a brief update related to our return to class on Monday, January 3, 2021.

We are aware the CDC recently [reduced the recommended quarantine period](#) for individuals infected or exposed to Covid-19. Similarly, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health [updated its guidelines earlier this week](#) to reflect the advice from the CDC. When classes resume next week, we will assess the guidelines more closely and their impact on School operations. In the interim, Austin Prep's original quarantine requirements will stay in place.

There remain two overarching goals in this pandemic: keep the school community as safe as possible and keep Austin Prep open. If we've learned anything from this pandemic, we've learned that remote and hybrid learning models cause significant hardship and challenges to the emotional health and academic growth of students. Students may not opt into remote learning at Austin Prep, but there remains an option for students who have been quarantined by the Health Office.

[Per the CDC](#), multiple studies have shown that Covid-19 transmission in schools is typically similar or lower than levels of general transmission in the community – if schools have prevention strategies in place such as universal masking and limited class size. Masking will remain in place at Austin Prep and class size averages about 15.

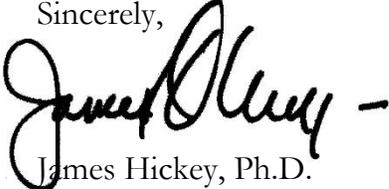
As much as we are learning to live with this pandemic, I also know that living with the pandemic is tiresome. We must remain steadfast and committed, however, to the [covenant](#) we all have with the Austin Prep community. **Most importantly, stay home if you are experiencing any symptoms.**

We're all looking forward to the day when the pandemic will be behind us. In the meantime, St. Augustine offers some advice: "Trust the past to God's mercy, the present to God's love, and the future to God's providence."

Blessings to us all for the New Year.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Hickey" followed by a horizontal dash.

James Hickey, Ph.D.
Head of School