
Subject: UPDATE: In-Person Classes on Monday, Testing, COVID-Positive Protocols, and more
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 4:55:36 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: LC Communications
To: All Students

January 9, 2022

Dear Students and Parents,

Greetings from campus, where the lovely snow from Friday has been replaced with light rain. I am writing with our latest update on the virus and the return to in-person classes. While the Omicron variant may be less dangerous than the Delta variant, it is proving just as tricky in terms of our handling it. The school, like much of the nation, is caught in the middle of the transition from a pandemic that we all hoped would have ended by now, to what may very well be endemic in our society. This is uncharted territory for us all, and we need to be patient as best practices and policy changes evolve.

In addition, one of the protocols we had used up to this point—community-wide weekly testing—is no longer working effectively. All students, faculty, and staff were tested for COVID on Wednesday evening/Thursday morning, but we have not yet received all results. Weekly testing helps to protect the community only if we receive the results in a timely fashion. Mirimus Lab is no longer able to meet a 24-hour turnaround time; indeed, this latest delay is now over 70 hours. We are only just beginning to get the results from Thursday, and we are expecting some additional positive cases. Once we have all the results, we will send an all-clear message to the community.

This new reality has forced us to make some new decisions that are premised on the following assumptions:

- COVID-19 is now most likely endemic.
- The Omicron variant is generally accepted to be much less severe than previous variants.
- COVID-19, and the Omicron variant in particular, is generally mild in young people.
- Loomis is a highly vaccinated and boosted environment. With the exception of only a few students, all of our students, faculty, and staff are fully vaccinated, and many have received their booster shots.
- Online learning has taken a significant toll on the mental health of our students and faculty.

Accordingly, we have decided the following:

In-Person Classes Will Resume on Monday, January 10

We will resume in-person classes tomorrow, Monday, January 10. Faculty have been asked to make sure students have three feet of distance between each other whenever possible in the classroom, everyone is masking inside and in all dormitory common spaces (please use surgical or KN95/N95 masks), and we are restricting the number of visitors to campus.

Revised Testing Protocols

The long waiting times for our pooled saliva results has been problematic. We have decided to suspend twice weekly pooled-saliva testing in favor of rapid testing only those students who are symptomatic.

Employees who are symptomatic should not come to campus but rather should test with their physician or a lab. Day students who develop symptoms while off campus should also not come to campus but rather should contact their physician and the Health Center. Of course, employees and day students who begin to feel unwell while on campus should alert the Health Center right away.

We may conduct some target sample testing each week based on conditions. This testing may include interscholastic athletes if required by the Founders League. Many of our peer schools have or are moving toward the same revised testing protocol.

COVID-Positive Protocols

If you have been following the news, you know that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) revised guidelines for isolation have been a subject of vigorous debate.

For the time being, Loomis Chaffee protocols will direct any student, faculty, or staff who tests positive to isolate for seven days and return on day eight IF they have been fever-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication AND if any other symptoms they have been experiencing are waning. Before returning, students must consult with the Health Center and employees with Human Resources.

Any student who is required to isolate and who is well enough to keep up with their schoolwork can contact their academic dean, who will design an academic plan for them while they are off campus. Please refer to the Academic Protocols sent to all community members on January 7 for more information.

Booster Clinic for Students

On January 24, Loomis Chaffee will host a COVID booster clinic for students who completed their initial COVID vaccinations at least five months prior. The deadline for securing an appointment at that clinic is today. Students were sent a link to that online scheduling form on January 6 and January 8. Parents, we will need you to upload a consent form to the Magnus Health portal. The form is available for download on Magnus. As of this morning, parents should be able to access the Magnus portal. If you receive an error message, please be patient and try again in a few hours; our website may experience intermittent problems as the restoration process is completed. The deadline for consent is January 14.

Academic Accommodations for Unique Circumstances

While we are not anticipating that we will offer the same level of online instruction that we provided last year, we do know that some students will need to be away from campus for prolonged periods of time. Those students and their families should be in touch with the Academic Office to develop plans that accommodate such circumstances.

We recognize that many of you will approve of this approach while others of you will harbor more doubts. On balance we believe this is the right decision for our school community at this time. We do expect the next few weeks to be complicated, and we will be making further decisions regarding Head's Weekend and academic policies for winter term as we monitor the situation and gather more information. We also need to clarify testing protocols and requirements for interscholastic competition with the Founders League and our other peer schools.

As always, please direct your questions and comments to me; our COVID-19 coordinator, Mary Liscinsky; the Health Center; or for international students, Dean of International Students Molly Pond. The Academic Office is also available to answer your questions about classes and academic issues, and the Dean of Students Office can help as well.

Please bear with us as we work our way through this challenging time, which we hope will be short-

lived.

Warm regards and *Ne cede malis*,
Sheila