



IMPORTANT UPDATE: SCHOOL START IN JANUARY, 2021

Date: **December 31, 2020**

Dear Parents, Students and Community Members:

This message is to further inform you of our planning concerning the resumption of on-campus instruction in January, 2021, and is based upon the present travel and health restrictions imposed by the Austrian government. I appreciate your patience while we forge plans for the new year in the hopes that we will be able to resume normal instruction on campus as soon as possible.

Currently, Austria is in the midst of a third 'lockdown' with all businesses closed including hotels, restaurants and shops, excepting grocery stores, gas stations, banks and doctor's offices. This lockdown is in place through January 18, 2021 for those who can prove a negative Covid-19 test, or January 24, 2021 for those who cannot produce a negative test. The health risk indicator level remains a **RED** for all of Austria presently. Further, *the borders of Austria are closed* to all except those from a select few nations including Australia, Finland, Ireland, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Uruguay, and the Vatican. All flights from the UK and South Africa have been cancelled.

Current Austrian Covid-19 Requirements and Restrictions (Dec. 30, 2020):

<https://www.austria.info/en/service-and-facts/coronavirus-information>

As far as when the quarantine requirement for all those who enter Austria will be lifted, the situation remains somewhat unclear. Several days ago, I read that this restriction would be lifted and a return to a negative Covid-19 test as the entry requirement would be in place as of January 18th. Yesterday, the newspaper reported the quarantine requirement would be lifted on the 10th of January. After making several calls, the general supposition from officials is that it will be lifted on the 14th of January. All such statements seem to be dependent upon the infection situation in early January 2021 and, obviously, no one is willing to risk a potentially false prediction. Because this situation remains open-ended and because a majority of our students will need to enter Austria from abroad in order to resume their education, it is this aspect of reopening our campus that is the highest priority in our planning.

One thing is very certain: *AIS-Salzburg cannot meet the quarantine requirements for students who arrive in Austria* while the quarantine requirements remain in effect. There is no reasonable way in which a particular student can be quarantined in or dormitories for a five-day period minimally. The authorities would most likely require that the entire school population be quarantined—an impossible task. Therefore, *our dormitories will reopen only after the quarantine restriction for those who enter Austria is eliminated and we return to the requirement of proof of a negative Covid-19 test result.*

I realize that this makes it difficult for your planning. Please understand, however, that any late returns to the school after we have started instruction will be excused and we will do our best to keep those students who are not present informed and on top of all academic work assigned in the meantime.

If we assume that the infection numbers in Austria continue to decline to acceptable rates and that the quarantine restricted is lifted as of January 18th, we will put into effect the following plan for reopening on-campus instruction and residency:

January, 2021 - Tentative Planning:

- January 18:** Lockdown ends in Austria; businesses, hotels, restaurants, etc. re-open
- January 18-20:** Arrival of students living abroad if the quarantine requirements are lifted and a negative Covid-19 test requirement is reinstated at the borders.
- January 21:** In-classes instruction resumes (one week later than planned whereby the spring break period will be reduced by one week in April) for any and all students able to arrive on campus.

As soon as we gain reliable information that the two external requirements (end of lockdown and end of quarantine at the borders) requisite for putting this plan into action are gained, we will report to you immediately to confirm this. In the meantime, you can check at the following link for updated information:

Current Entry Regulations for Austria (Dec. 31, 2020):

<https://www.austria.info/en/service-and-facts/coronavirus-information/entry-regulations>

If we can put this plan into effect, all community members should bear the following aspects in mind as related to their residency status at our school:

1. Non-Resident (Day) Students:

Day students at all grade levels may return to classes to resume face-to-face instruction as of 09:00, Thursday, January 21, 2021 provided no government regulations prohibit this. It is assumed that the health risk level will remain **RED** and that our Corona Strategy policies, procedures and protocols will be in full effect in response. See policies, procedures and protocols [here](#).

2. 5-Day Resident Students:

Five-day boarding students resident in Austria may return to the school as of Wednesday, January 20, 2021 and move into the school dormitories provided they have a negative Covid-19 test taken within the past 72 hours. While at health risk level **RED** or **ORANGE**, 5-day boarders may not return home on weekends unless approval is granted by the school administration. There is no extra charge levied for weekend stays during these health risk levels as stated in our Corona Virus Strategy previously ([see policy statement](#)).

3. Resident Students:

All resident students who must enter Austria to resume residency and face-to-face instruction must arrive **AFTER the quarantine requirements have ended at the borders**. If the quarantine requirement is lifted as of January 18, 2021, resident students may arrive at any time as of that date and resume residency provided testing requirements are met—a negative Covid-19 test less than 72 hours old—upon arrival. It would be preferable if such students arrive from January 18 through 20, 2021 if possible. If arrival is not possible without quarantine, resident students are expected to arrive when the quarantine requirements are eventually lifted. Appropriate online information ([here](#)) and chosen airline companies should also be checked with for further confirmation. All students not present will be kept up-to-date with online information over the Google Classroom platform on a daily basis and are formally excused from the attendance requirement until they can arrive and resume residency and instruction.

The office staff will resume work as of January 4, 2021 and is available at any time at the following email addresses :

School Office (Gundringer): office@ais-salzburg.at

Administration (McLean): pmclean@ais-salzburg.at

I do wish that I could be more specific at this time, but the nature of this pandemic makes it notoriously difficult to make solid, reliable decisions and plan with confirmation. It is my hope, however, that as we progress through the first few weeks of January, the situation will become more and more clear and a program can eventually be put together for those who need to enter Austria for the resumption of on-campus instruction.

Other Points/Commentary:

1. The school administration will maintain its refund policies as listed in official enrollment documents as well as recent [communications](#).
2. Events included in tuition and fees which postponed previously will be re-scheduled this spring if feasible. Early announcements to this effect will be communicated as soon as reliable planning is possible.
3. The modified Spring Break period will be from Saturday, April 3 until Sunday, April 11, 2021. Please adjust travel plans accordingly if necessary. The remainder of the school calendar will not be changed unless absolutely necessary given conditions that allow no alternative.
4. Many students will need to do a great deal of intensive study typified by a high level of motivation in order to catch up in their classes following the online instructional period. All AIS-Salzburg students should plan on a focused and rigorous instructional period from the time classes resume until the end of the school year.
5. The school's academic attire and style code is in full effect as of the resumption of classes in January. Please review the parameters of the academic dress code before your arrival to resume in-class instruction. Details can be found [here](#).
6. At the present time, we are not aware of any changes or cancellations that affect Advanced Placement® Examinations this spring and assume that such exams will be held on time and within the normal parameters.
7. Senior students applying for university acceptance should be certain to check with Mr. Agardy as soon as possible to ensure that all documentation required is received on time. Now, during the break, is a very good time to set your plans or goals and communicate these with him (jagardy@ais-salzburg.at). The senior paper deadlines have been moved back to just before the end of the Winter Trimester (Feb. 26) to accommodate student-advisor communication and assistance.
8. A number of new students will be enrolling at AIS-Salzburg in January and starting their academic career in our halls and dormitories. We would like to request that all returning students prepare to help make them feel welcome and informed upon their arrival.
9. The possibility of an infection occurring within our boarding community will remain high through the coming months until a significant percentage of the local population is immunized

against Covid-19. No one should suppose that we will not take our responsibilities very seriously to ensure the health of all members of our school community as well as heed all official, governmental requirements in the meantime.

I will update the community with any further, relevant information as soon as possible in the coming days and weeks. Again, I thank you all for your constant support and patience during this exceptional school year and trust that you—just as we—are looking forward to having our students back on campus and in our classrooms as soon as possible.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a very healthy and successful new year in 2021.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul McLean', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul McLean
Headmaster
AIS-Salzburg