



IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Update on Corona Crisis and Resumption of Instruction

Date: **January 4, 2021**
Follow-Up Information: As required

Dear AIS-Salzburg Community Members;

Since my last letter, the health crisis situation here in Austria has not been very cooperative with our planning, unfortunately. It may likely be that alternative plans will have to be made and on-campus instruction delayed for a period of time. This letter is designed to update you with this latest information and what it implies for the resumption of on-campus instruction and residency. As always, this remains tentative and uncertain, but will be followed up as soon as the situation and official responses become definitive and reliable.

Here is a brief overview of the present situation:

1. The present numbers of infections per day in Austria have plateaued at around 1,500 per day. The government has said several times that the goal of the present lockdown (through January 18) is a daily infection rate under 1,000.
2. The infection rate in the Province of Salzburg is the highest in all nine provinces of Austria and double the national rate of infection per 100,000 over a seven-day period. One possible cause of this may be that Salzburg Province opened up free testing for all (without registration) recently which may have identified more positive cases than usual. Still, Salzburg has become a problem area of immediate concern.
3. It appears that the Austrian national parliament will reject the plan to end the lockdown for those who can prove a negative test as of January 18 (Jan. 24th for those who cannot). This most likely means that the authorities will have to extend the lockdown period through January 24, 2021 for all, including schools.
4. The infection rates in Germany are also not going down as expected through lockdown and other measures recently imposed. The German government is considering extending their lockdown through the end of January, possibly into February. This is important because the government of Austria is not likely to end the quarantine requirements at the borders before Germany does so as well.

In my letter of December 31, I announced that our plan would be to have resident students arrive at the school between January 18th and 20th, provided the quarantine regulations were ended at the borders. Further, our planning was that instruction for all students would begin on Thursday, January 21st. It now appears that the possibility of putting this plan into action may not be realistic. We will know for certain in the next few days. If it is the case that we cannot put this preferred plan into action, the following alternative plan will be put into effect. Fundamentally, this alternative plan calls for the resumption online instruction through whatever period of time is required until key restrictions are lifted.

Alternative Plan:

- January 18:** Online instruction resumes for all students
- January 25-31:** Resident students arrive and take up residency if quarantine restrictions are lifted. Non-resident students and 5-day boarders living in Austria may attend classes physically as of January 25th; resident students unable to arrive remain involved in online instruction.
- February 1:** All students attend on-campus instruction; all resident students on campus

This back-up plan does not affect the school calendar otherwise. We will maintain a one-week spring break period in April (April 3-11) to make up for the loss of instruction during the extended winter break.

Please bear in mind or continue to bear in mind the following:

1. We are unable to quarantine any resident students here on our campus. Until the quarantine requirements are suspended, resident students cannot take up residency at AIS-Salzburg. As soon as we are aware of when this restriction will be lifted, we will communicate this with you.
2. We expect the Austrian government to announce any changes or extensions to the present lockdown requirements in the coming days and we will then review our planning in light of these announcements and send communication to you as soon as possible.
3. If our alternative plan needs to be put into effect, you can rely on online instruction commencing on January 18, 2021 and up through whatever period of time is necessary before all resident students can return to our campus. Non-resident and 5-day boarding students will be able to commence with on-campus instruction as of January 25 provided the government announces the re-opening of schools at that time. Otherwise, online instruction will continue up to such an announcement is made and face-to-face instruction allowed.

Again, this information is based upon a tentative and changeable situation. I trust that in the coming days, we will receive the information required to confirm our plans for the resumption of instruction at AIS-Salzburg. My apologies for the potential and real difficulties which affect your own personal planning, travel arrangements and expectations. The situation remains highly unstable and unpredictable.

Thank you again for your patience and understanding. Please let me know if you have any questions; I will be available through the coming days and weeks at pmclean@ais-salzburg.at and will be sending out further information in the near future.

Yours,



Paul McLean
Headmaster