

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Update on Corona Crisis and Resumption of Instruction**

Date: **January 22, 2021**  
Follow-Up Information: As Required

Dear AIS-Salzburg Community Members;

This update is to provide you with an understanding of the situation here in Salzburg and Austria generally as well as give you some specific information relevant to travel to Austria, tutorial assistance provisions in the coming weeks as well as other points relative to the eventual re-opening of the school for regular on-campus instruction. Please bear in mind that this information is dependent upon current data and—to an extent—predictions of future conditions. As the situation develops, we will provide you with further updates in as timely a way as possible.

### **Present Situation: January 22, 2021**

Currently, all of Austria remains under lockdown conditions as previously communicated. All public schools remained closed except for supervision of younger children and specific tutorial assistance for secondary students on an irregular basis. Here's a general overview of select infection and vaccination data:

7-day incident of positive cases per 100,000 population in Austria:	116.5
7-day incident of positive cases per 100,000 population in Salzburg Province:	<b>219.0</b>
7-day incident of positive cases per 100,000 population, age 15-24:	150.5
Average daily positive infections in Austria in the past week:	@ 1,750

Vaccinations given in Austria:	161,965 (over 80 years of age and health workers) -
Vaccinations in Salzburg Province:	10,050 (1.8%)

### **Recent Government Announcements and Potential Actions**

The present lockdown is to be maintained through February 7, 2021. Toward the end of this lockdown period, the government will re-evaluate the situation and determine under what conditions the lockdown ends and/or if the lockdown continues and for how long. These considerations will include when to open public schools for regular instruction in the classrooms and under what conditions as well as which commercial businesses of trade are allowed to reopen. Hotels, restaurants, theaters, etc., are presently scheduled to open as of March 1, 2021 if conditions allow this.

The government has announced that it would prefer to see a 7-day incidence rate per 100,000 population of 50 or less and daily infections below 1,000 nationwide. This appears to be one of the primary factors affecting the government's decisions concerning future actions at the end of the present lockdown.

A second important factor seems to be the proven existence of the mutated British Corona virus (B.1.1.7) in a number of provinces of Austria within the past week. Being significantly more contagious than the virus

previously detected, the government wants to ensure that any lifting of restrictions is carried out only after it is certain that a new wave of positive infections caused by this mutation doesn't take place. Presently, all of Europe is very concerned with the spread of this mutated Corona virus. This morning, discussion between European leaders concerning further border controls and restrictions on flights within the EU was reported in the news.

Whether or not schools open on February 8, 2021 now appears to be questionable although there is strong pressure in Austria from the citizenry to do so. We will likely not have confirmation one way or the other until early until the first week of February.

Covid Testing is now widely available throughout Austria free of charge. An online reservation is required for an appointment.

### **Travel Restrictions**

There has been no change in the restrictions relevant to entering Austria from abroad. All except those entering from select destinations and those who qualify for exceptions, are responsible for abiding by a voluntary, 10-day quarantine with the chance to test out of this on the fifth day with a negative Covid-19 test.

After much discussion with local authorities and a careful analysis of the written regulations pertinent to entering the country, it appears that AIS-Salzburg resident students may enter Austria without having to meet the quarantine regulations and represent an exception to these requirements. All boarding students presently outside of Austria will, however, need to carry a statement available from the school office explaining this exceptional status alongside a completed Pre-Travel Clearance (PTC) form which must be presented to border authorities upon arrival. This PTC form can be filled out online at this URL:

<https://www.formularservice.gv.at/site/fsrv/user/formular.aspx?pid=15dd7f9c98c24952828eb414c8884f1a&pn=Bfd027cf662624276a5ca9a9b970bcdf9&lang=en>

A valid, negative PCR test remains a requirement for all who enter Austria from abroad.

### **Tutorial Assistance**

The school administration and faculty have decided to offer a schedule of tutorial assistance sessions starting next week to directly assist any students who are presently close enough to the school to attend. This is allowed within the present Austrian health protection measures and lockdown requirements. I have attached the schedule of tutorial assistance for the next two weeks to this message. A few important aspects of this offering need to be emphasized:

1. Students should inform their teachers that they intend to participate by email or telephone.
2. As tutorial assistance, this is not a replacement for the online instruction provided.
3. While on campus, all students must be masked with a FFP2 mask in accordance with present regulations which must be worn at all times while in public areas on campus. Instructors must also remain masked.
4. All students participating as well as all staff must maintain a 2 meter distance between themselves at all times.
5. Before and after tutorial meetings with the teachers, students are asked not to loiter in the school's buildings or campus for any length of time.
6. Lunch will not be provided at the school between tutorial assistance meetings.

7. Students who choose to participate will not be required to present a recent, negative Covid test and therefore, must be certain to abide by all distancing and masking requirements.

We are well aware that the students at AIS-Salzburg are badly in need of the social contact and interaction which typifies the regular school programming. This tutorial assistance is not to be mistaken for regular programming. Social interaction can only take place within the parameters of the present regulations that are in place. This is unfortunate, but the primary concern is for the health and safety of everyone in our community and we hope that the advantage gained through meeting with the teachers—even under such conditions—will outweigh the burden of meeting these requirements. This is a small step forward but must be taken with proper caution and care.

### **Dormitories Open for Special Cases**

The school's dormitories will be open as of this weekend for those boarding students who need to reside here for the remainder of the lockdown period and until the restrictions on schools is lifted. Since this period is of uncertain length, we would like to ask all those who may need such accommodation to consider the following carefully and initiate contact with the school administration as soon as possible.

1. The resident and kitchen staff will be on duty as of tomorrow (Saturday, January 23, 2021) to provide supervision and care as well as meals to any students who need to be accommodated.
2. Legitimate reasons for coming to the dormitories before the school lockdown is lifted include:
  - a. travel plans that allow no reasonable alternative.
  - b. accommodation needs that cannot be met reasonably outside of the school
  - c. the proven need to improve one's academic status and performance provided through the structure of the school, the school staff and availability of the teaching faculty (limited).
3. The school's faculty members will continue to meet their online teaching obligations as well as provide on-campus tutorial assistance (see above) according to the schedule. Many of them will be working from their classrooms on campus but not all. There may be some time for resident students to be able to meet with their teachers and discuss the subject matter *ad hoc*, but not anything like the regular schedule of courses that is in effect during the regular school year.
4. The resident staff will be available and on duty through many hours of the day and evening/night to provide assistance, supervision and parenting. They will also set up required and voluntary opportunities for exercise, movement and getting some fresh air.
5. All students who are on campus and accommodated in the dorms while the lockdown is in effect must continue to spend a significant amount of their time with online instruction and learning in accordance with the teacher's requirements.
6. For students resident on campus, the following measures are in place at health-risk level **RED**:
  - a. wearing an FFP2 mask at all times in public areas of the school except in dormitory rooms and out of doors.
  - b. keeping of a 2-meter distance from others at all times.
  - c. the presentation of a negative PCR or antigen Covid test upon arrival which is not more than 48 hours old.
  - d. free, independent movement off campus is limited to the immediate area surrounding the school campus and with prior communication and approval. The resident staff will organize on- and off-campus events that should help provide sufficient opportunities for exercise and fresh air.
  - e. All other relevant aspects of the AIS-Salzburg Corona Strategy as well as the school's Parent and Student Handbook, 2020-2021 are in effect upon arrival.
7. Further measures may be established by the school administration dependent upon the situation and the current health threat to individuals and the community as a whole.

Earlier this week, it appeared that the situation would improve relatively rapidly, the infection numbers decline significantly as the vaccinations increased, and that we could begin the opening up of the school under conditions that would be more comfortable and beneficial to our boarders who have been tied to their computers for online learning for far too long at this point. Unfortunately, the situation in the past couple of days has dampened our hopes somewhat and made us realize that more patience and further considerations are needed.

### **Concluding Statements**

Therefore, our present position and recommendation is: If the current conditions for you or your child(ren) are such that it would be of benefit for them to be at the school and under our care during this lockdown period—despite the significant restrictions that are in place—we can discuss this with you and consider their arrival and accommodation. If this is not the case, we would appreciate that your children not be sent to us for residency at this time.

I again remind everyone that the occurrence of a positive case within our halls could potentially have very serious consequences for everyone in our community and necessarily cause a delay in getting back to what we all hope for: a regular school day, the absence of health restrictions, and face-to-face interaction with friends, teachers, and staff members.

Again, I thank you for your continued support, your patience and your forbearance in this difficult times. I would personally welcome your comments and communication at any time and hope that I can be of some assistance to you if necessary. We will continue to provide further updates as necessary.

Yours,



Paul McLean  
Headmaster

#### *Attachments:*

1. *Tutorial Assistance Schedule: January 25 through February 5, 2021*
2. *Updated AIS-Salzburg Corona Strategy*