



Corona Update: Actions Given Likely Scenarios

Date: February 8, 2021

Dear AIS-Salzburg Community Members;

The conditions under which we are opening up our school and dormitories this month are not ideal. I think that everyone understands that until the pandemic subsides, we cannot expect the ideal to be reinstated. Given this, we feel it important, if not imperative, to inform you of what steps would be taken and what procedures would be put into place if we are confronted with a situation in which the health threat to our community rises.

Below, I have organized the information under three general scenarios that represent a threat to the community and demand action on our part that is reasonable and informed. We also think it important that you are all informed of these actions beforehand so that you know what to expect; even if the particular situation may demand some flexibility given the lack of specific details on what the local health authorities would require.

I. Current Situation and Expert Commentary

1. Quick-Testing

The Austrian authorities are requiring that for young people to take part in schooling above the elementary level (middle and high schools), regular antigen quick-tests are required of all school personnel and students in order to help ensure that school buildings and campuses remain as safe as possible. Refusal to undertake these self-administered tests disqualifies participation in all cases. AIS-Salzburg will be administering these quick-tests on Tuesday mornings before first period (8:50 AM) for all residents and day students and on Thursdays before first period (8:50 AM) a second time for day students. Attached to this communication is information about these tests and how they are administered.

These quick-tests are not as effective as standard PCR tests which are evaluated in a medical lab. Therefore, the likelihood of a false result—whether false-positive or false-negative—is higher. Since we will be carrying out up to 100 tests per week within our community, the chance of a positive result arising is probable. Our actions in response to a positive quick-test result within the resident community or non-resident community are, therefore, addressed below (**Points II & III**).

These Covid-19 antigen quick-tests are not to be considered first-line verifications of positive infection, but are to be utilized as a kind of 'pre-test' to determine what individuals may need to be tested with a PCR Covid-19 test.

2. Infection Situation in Austria and Salzburg Province

Many health experts have expressed concern that the present numbers of daily infections as well as the 7-day incidence-rate in Austria does not justify the current easing of restrictions and that within 14 days (incubation period), the numbers of infections could rise significantly, forcing the government to consider a further, third, lockdown regionally or nationally. Currently, the South African mutation has been identified in Tirol and may have spread further.

The numbers have, however, been reduced significantly from what they were in November and Austria is presently in the top-third of EU countries in terms of infection rates and overall health safety. However, it seems that with the possibility of a further lockdown being put into effect due to presently-unpredictable factors, it is within the school's mandate to develop and communicate plans in reaction to this eventuality and are addressed below (**Point IV**).

3. Vaccinations

Due to delivery and logistical problems, the number of vaccine charges delivered to Austria has slowed down, requiring revising and adjustment to the national vaccination plan. At present, it appears that all those above 75 years of age, those at risk and those within the health profession will not be vaccinated until the end of March: two months from now minimally. Since the immunization of these groups are prerequisite to any reduction of health-safety measures or the easing of restrictions, we should plan on the present situation—or one very similar to it—to continue through the next two months.

Given the above and utilizing the best information available at this time, these are our reactions and procedures given the three scenarios that most threaten the health and safety of our community:

1. a positive test within the resident community
2. a positive test within the non-resident community
3. declaration of a further lockdown that directly affects AIS-Salzburg programming

II. Scenario 1: A Positive Covid-19 Test Within the Resident Community

If this occurs through the Covid-19 quick-tests administered at the school, then:

1. The AIS-Salzburg Health Coordinator identifies the subject and documents the result.
2. The Health Coordinator informs the administration and moves the subject to the infirmary. If the subject has a roommate, the roommate will be moved to his/her/their room.
3. A second quick-test is administered to the subject and roommate.
4. The Health Coordinator documents the results of the second quick-test.
5. Regardless of the second quick-test result, the Health Coordinator reports the positive first result and sends the required information immediately to corona@stadt-salzburg.at and awaits instruction from them on how and where the positive subject's PCR test will be administered. Upon reception, these instructions will be carried out immediately. After contacting corona@stadt-salzburg.at, the school Health Coordinator will notify the student's parents/guardians, and continue to update throughout.
6. The results of the PCR Covid-19 test is received and the test result is documented by the Health Coordinator —

N: If negative, the subject is returned to the community and parents or guardians are informed of the PCR Covid-19 test result as negative.

P: If positive, the subject is isolated at the school, the local authorities are consulted, the parents or guardians are informed, and all directives required by the local health authorities—including possible further PCR Covid-19 testing within the community, quarantine, etc.—will be carried out by the administration and communicated to all community members.

III. Scenario 2: A Positive Covid-19 Test Within the Non-Resident Student Body or Staff

If this occurs through the Covid-19 quick-tests administered at the school, then:

1. The AIS-Salzburg Health Coordinator identifies the subject and documents the result.
2. The Health Coordinator informs the administration and isolates the subject from the school body. If the subject is a day student with a sibling, the sibling will also be removed from the student body.
3. A second quick-test is administered to the subject and roommate.
4. The Health Coordinator documents the results of the second quick-test.
5. Regardless of the second quick-test result, the Health Coordinator reports the positive first results and sends the required information immediately to corona@stadt-salzburg.at and awaits instruction from them on how and where the positive subjects PCR test will be administered. Upon reception, these instructions will be carried out immediately. After contacting corona@stadt-salzburg.at, the school Health Coordinator will notify the student's parents/guardians, instructing them to come and get their child(ren) if possible, and to take the subject for the ordered PCR test.
6. The results of the PCR Covid-19 test is received and the test result is documented by the Health Coordinator —

N: If negative, the subject may return to the community the next school day with documentation of negative PCR test result submitted to the school's Health Coordinator.

P: If positive, the parents or guardians of the student are responsible for carrying out all required instructions and directives given by health officials. If further PCR testing or other measures are required within the school community, the administration will be compliant with all of these and communicate these to the school community immediately.

IV. Scenario 3: Lockdown Declared Which Directly Affects AIS-Salzburg

This scenario assumes a local, regional, provincial or national lockdown issued by government and health authorities which will necessarily close all secondary schools in Salzburg city.

If a lockdown were announced, the school administration would be compliant with any and all restrictions or measures announced, *which are likely to include:*

1. Non-resident students not being allowed to come to the school for instruction and would be required to revert to online instruction and learning.
2. All resident students and staff would be restricted to campus and be compliant with any other requirements put into effect by the government.
3. Individual members (an emergency team) of administrators and staff members that are non-resident would become resident on campus to assist with the supervision and accommodation of the resident students.
4. Instruction for resident students would either:
 - a. be carried out on campus—if non-resident teachers are allowed to arrive and teach within strict health-safety parameters—for the length of the lockdown period.
 - or
 - b. be carried out online on campus with teachers who are at distance for the length of the lockdown period.
5. All persons on the school campus would continue to be regularly tested.
6. Parents or guardians who would have their children return home would be allowed to depart and then engage in online distance instruction and learning.

There are important questions associated with this scenario (#3) for which we do not presently have definitive answers. If possible, it would be our preference that our resident students remained on campus through the lockdown and were continuously instructed by our teaching faculty and resident staff—while maintaining very strict health-safety standards and continuous testing. Whether this would be possible or not is up to the local health and governmental authorities.

If the authorities do not allow such interaction on campus between resident and non-resident persons, then we would keep the dormitories open and staffed and make provision for online instruction and learning on campus for the duration of the lockdown period.

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We hope that none of these scenarios come about and that we are able to keep our community safe through the coming weeks and months and that we can all focus on the important matter of college-preparatory education. Whatever might happen, we will try to maintain regular, timely communication with the entire community.

I thank you for your attention once again.

Yours,



Paul McLean
Headmaster
AIS-Salzburg