



Corona Update: Latest Information

Date: February 25, 2021

Dear AIS-Salzburg Community Members;

We are now finishing up the second full week of regular testing within the school and I am very pleased to report that all tests given to date have been negative. For the most part, the students are doing a conscientious job trying to maintain proper masking and distancing, although familiarity within and among the members of the school community on campus can make this difficult at times. The staff and, particularly, the resident staff is doing an excellent job trying to both keep everyone within the health-safety requirements while trying to ensure that the social interaction and levels of activity remains appropriate and supportive of a positive attitude within our community.

1. Current Situation

Since mid-February, Covid restrictions in Austria have been eased a bit and schools are open as well as shops and hair/nail/beauty parlors under strict conditions. Since that time, the Austrian health and governmental authorities have been waiting to see if any significant jump in infections is observed. Here are the numbers as of today, February 25, 2021:

Number of pos. infections nationwide in the past 7 days:	@ 1,850 per day/average
Nationwide incidence rate per 100,000 over the past 7 days:	145.2
Incidence rate for Salzburg (province) per 100,000 over past 7 days:	155

Vaccination doses received in Austria:	595,045
Registered vaccinations in Austria (total)	556,506
Registered double vaccinations for immunization	213,779
Total vaccine-eligible population (over 16)	7,757,564
Percentage of total vaccine-eligible population vaccinated	4.42%
Registered vaccinations in Salzburg (province)	19,883 (3.56%)

When all those over 80 years of age will be vaccinated in Salzburg (province)	March 31, 2021
When all those over 80 years of age, those at risk and health professionals will be vaccinated in Salzburg (province)	April 30, 2021

Commentary:

When restrictions were eased to allow school openings as well as some businesses to resume operation, the government announced that on March 1, 2021, the situation would be reviewed and further decisions made concerning adjustments that might be necessary.

In the past two days, Covid-19 infections have risen over the 2,000 per day mark. (Feb. 24 & 25). If this trend and total continues or rises over the weekend, the government may well consider putting further

restrictions into place, at least locally where infections have increased most dramatically. Therefore, we are awaiting word on any possible changes that may affect our ability to continue carry out our duties as we have been these last three weeks.

The primary concern presently is that both the British and the South African mutations have been identified in most of the Austrian provinces with the South Africa variant increasing infections in Tirol and the British mutation causing numbers to rise in the east in and around Vienna. The threat of these more infectious virus mutations causing numbers to increase dramatically is or serious concern to health officials and the provincial and national government.

Unfortunately, the rate of vaccinating the Austrian public is slower than expected with only 4.5% of the population presently immunized against the Corona virus. This low percentage is not yet having a positive effect on the overall infection situation. More positively, Austria's testing strategy is in full effect with over 250,000 tests being taken daily across the country and all students in schools being tested as well (approximately 450,000 per week). Some rise in the numbers of infections are due to this increased testing, but not to the extent presently indicated.

2. Preparedness

On February 8th, we sent out updated information concerning possible scenarios and our reactions to these. This will provide the foundation of our considerations depending upon what is announced on Monday, March 1, 2021.

It may be that the government decides to maintain the present restriction levels throughout the country where the infection rates are relatively low and increase restrictions in those regions where the numbers are high. If this is the case, Salzburg city may be allowed to continue under unchanged circumstances and our educational offerings continue as beforehand. Much depends upon how the situation develops in Salzburg Province and Salzburg city in the coming days. If the numbers of infections increases dramatically, it is almost certain the schools will be shut down locally for a time.

On Monday, the government may decide to curtail public education nationwide if this would help control and stabilize the numbers of positive infections.

Should the local, provincial or national government close schools in Salzburg city, AIS-Salzburg and all of its residents would, effectively be in lockdown. Should this scenario be realized, we would put into effect those measures previously mentions in our Feb. 8 update. Here is a reminder of these:

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 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.

The situation remains uncertain and our responses hypothetical at this time. We hope that we will have more solid information to pass on as of Monday evening, March 1, 2021. In the meantime, I appreciate your patience and your continued support.

3. Spring Break

We recently sent out a notice concerning those students who may need to be accommodated over the Spring Break period from April 3 - 11, 2021. If your child may require such accommodation, please let us know as soon as you have made such a decision so that we can plan for this. We realize that many do not know if flights and other aspects of travel will allow travel home, so we will try to remain as flexible as possible. If there is a last-minute need for accommodation, we can support this. Soon, Ms. Baehler will be collecting any and all travel plans from you and your children.

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I thank you again for your attention until the next update.

Yours,



Paul McLean
Headmaster
AIS-Salzburg