



Corona Update: Latest Information

Date: March 30, 2021

Dear AIS-Salzburg Community Members;

The latest information out of Austria is generally not good. Infection rates continue to rise to the point that intensive-care beds in Vienna and Eastern Austria are in short supply and some hospitals have reached their capacity, moving further Covid-19 patients to other care facilities. Additionally, the 7-day incidence rate is rising across the country this past week although it has gone down in Salzburg Province somewhat. As you will recall, these were the two factors that the government and health officials were watching most carefully and which directly affect decision-making concerning further restrictions or other health protection measures to be put into place.

The provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland—all in the east—are under an ‘Easter lockdown’ from Thursday, April 1 until Tuesday, April 6 (April 11 in Vienna) and schools will be online for at least one week after the Easter Break there. The government is currently considering the extension of these restrictions and is also discussing a nation-wide lockdown after the Easter break.

In Salzburg, the 7-day incidence was high (over 300 one week ago) but has come down in the meantime. Although intensive-care beds are available, hospitals here have also experienced a dramatic increase in patients recently.

The government is expected to meet with all provincial governmental leaders this week (perhaps tomorrow) to try and decide on further possible measures. Many health officials and virologists state that a renewed nation-wide lockdown is required as soon as possible and are lobbying for such a decision. Provincial governors are resisting closing shops and schools, however.

We presently hope that more clarity will be achieved within the next few days and we will inform you of any measures that affect the school directly as soon as possible.

1. Current Situation

There have been no changes to the restrictions and measures in place one week ago. All hotels and restaurants, cafes, etc. remain closed. Masking and distancing is required in all public places and indoors outside of the home whenever two people are present. Shops and grocery stores are open as are hairdressing salons (appointments with proof of negative test). Curfews are in place from 20:00 to 06:00 and those who can work from home are encouraged to do so. Public schools are open to secondary level students for two days per week; on the other three days, instruction and learning is online.

Here are the latest numbers:

Number of pos. infections nationwide in the past 7 days:	@ 3,700+ per day/average
Nationwide incidence rate per 100,000 over the past 7 days:	240.4 (was 240.4 on 23.03)
Population group with highest infection rate:	Ages 15-24
Incidence rate: Salzburg (province) per 100,000 over past 7 days:	269.2 (was 300.3 on 23.03)
Incidence rate: Salzburg (city) per 100,000 over past 7 days:	272.2 (was 278.7 on 23.03)

Vaccination doses received in Austria:	1,705,185 (was 1,463,885 on 23.03)
Registered vaccinations in Austria (total)	1,569,086 (was 1,320,311 on 23.03)
Registered double vaccinations for immunization	417,321 (was 326,810 on 23.03)
Total vaccine-eligible population (over 16)	7,757,564
Percentage of total vaccine-eligible population vaccinated	15.29% (was 13.19% on 23.03)
Registered vaccinations in Salzburg (province)	62,924 (11.27% of over 16 yrs.)

Commentary:

The government expects to double the total number of people vaccinated with at least the first shot by the end of April and expects delivery of over 4 million doses of vaccine to be administered in May, 2021. Present predictions are that everyone over the age of 50 who wants to be vaccinated, will be by June 1, 2021 and all others over the age of 16 by mid-summer.

A 'green pass' for those who have been vaccinated, have recovered from Covid-19 and are immune or those with a positive test result is not expected to be put into place until later this spring and discussion concerning the parameters and organization of such a pass are presently in progress. This week, the EU governments began discussion of a EU-wide 'green pass' as well. This, however, is not expected to be put into place until June, 2021 at the earliest.

Several of the teachers and staff members at AIS-Salzburg have received the first of two vaccine injections and all others will receive theirs within the next two weeks. Presently, all teachers in Austria are getting vaccinated alongside fire and police department personnel and other essential professionals. Once this stage is complete, the government will begin vaccinating all those over the age of 65 before the end of the month.

Aside from the restrictions in Eastern Austria, Tirol is again experiencing a rise in positive infections with a new virus mutation. For the next two weeks, all those entering and exiting Tirol must show a negative Covid test that is less than 48 hours old.

2. AIS-Salzburg and Present Conditions

All present restrictions that have been in place since the students' return remain in place on our campus and we will continue to carry out testing, masking and distancing as required. In accordance with requirements, AIS-Salzburg is carrying out the following levels of self-testing with kits received from the government health agencies:

All non-resident staff members and day students: 3x per week

All 5-day boarders and resident staff members: 2x per week

All resident students: 1x per week

If a closure of public schools is called for in Salzburg Province or the city of Salzburg following the Spring Break period (April 12, 2021), AIS-Salzburg **will continue to hold face-to-face instruction for all students who are resident at the school**. Non-resident day students will have to continue with online instruction for the period determined by government health officials and it *may* not be possible for 5-day boarders to return home on weekends. We have been assured that being an international boarding school where a majority of our students both live and learn, we can continue to offer direct instruction to students who are resident and our non-resident instructors will continue to be able to commute to the school on a daily basis to carry out their duties.

The administration will try to provide short-term boarding for any day students who would like to do so provided we have the beds available in our dormitories. Should such a scenario become reality, we will respond quickly to any day student's parents who would like their children to become short-term residents during such a period of lockdown. Of course, non-resident students may also choose to remain at home and continue their learning online.

3. Traveling Over Spring Break

We trust that all parents of resident students have communicated their plans for the break by this time. If there are any last-minute changes in plans, please let us know as soon as possible. If it turns out that your son or daughter cannot travel and needs to remain here on campus over the break, we can accommodate this without delay; just let us know as soon as you can.

(Below is a repetition of the information from last week regarding those returning to Austria following the Spring Break period)

Upon arrival at the Austrian border, you will need to present the following information:

a. a **negative PCR test** result taken less than 48 hours previously.

b. a completed **Pre-Travel Clearance Form** (PTC)

This PTC form is available online in English or German at <https://entry.ptc.gv.at/en.html>

At the top of this form, in the first box, is the section labeled, 'EXCEPTIONS'. Please check the fourth and final box that states, 'The entry is subject to an exception in § 4 or § 5 of the COVID-19 entry regulations. Paragraph §5 (4), point 13 grants an exception to all those persons who participate in educational programming in Austria.

c. a **statement from the school** confirming enrollment and residence at the school.

With these documents, it should be possible to proceed across the border and return to the school. If, by chance, the border guards do not recognize the exception or overlook this and require you sign a statement of quarantine and give the address of your residence (Moosstrasse 106, 5020 Salzburg), please do so without discussion or argumentation. Once here, the exception is recognized and a PCR test to confirm non-quarantine status will be done on the fifth day after arrival at the school.

If you have any further questions related to Spring Break travel outside of Austria, please communicate these with our office staff as soon as possible at either office@ais-salzburg.at or cbaehler@ais-salzburg.at.

4. Students Hosted by Non-Parents over the Break

The administration of AIS-Salzburg requires that any boarding student being hosted by anyone other than their parents, obtain the required release and responsibility signatures necessary and present these to the Dean of Students (cbaehler@ais-salzburg.at) as soon as possible.

All those who host our students need to remain aware of and maintain all required guidelines currently in place and mandated by law in Austria designed to keep the population safe and lessen the chance of infection. Should a positive infection of a hosted student occur during the period of being hosted, please be aware that such a resident student would not be allowed to return to the school until after a period of mandatory quarantine and testing.

4. Visiting AIS-Salzburg for Spring Commencement (Graduation Ceremony)

The AIS-Salzburg administration is planning on our annual Commencement Exercises to take place on Thursday afternoon, May 20, 2021 at the Kavalierhaus, Klessheim Palace. We understand that under the present circumstances, it is difficult for the parents of our seniors as well as other guests to make plans for participating in this wonderful event. Because of the changeable nature of the present health crisis, it is difficult for us to assist you with reliable facts right now, but I think we can give you some parameters that will likely hold firm over the next 8-10 weeks and we will update these with new information as soon as it is available.

1. At present, all those entering Austria from all locations *except* Australia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore or South Korea are required to remain in quarantine for 10 days with release after five days with a negative PCR or antigen test.
2. Exceptions are made for necessary business travel, education continuation, medical or legal reasons. Although there is no particular exception made for collecting family members and then departing Austria after a short period of time, we believe that this *may* be considered an acceptable excuse for entering and departing without quarantine requirements.
3. Hotels are presently closed except to those who are required—because of the exception applied to them—to travel and stay in Austria. Some business travel is allowed under this exception. Tourism is not. We do expect that if the numbers of infections go down by the end of April, hotels will eventually be allowed to open, although tourists may still be restricted from coming until the summer.
4. We do *not* expect Austria or other EU countries to lift all quarantine requirements before the beginning of June and perhaps not before mid-summer.

I realize that this situation is less-than-transparent presently. At the very worst, you may want to plan on coming to Austria at least five days before Commencement on the 20th and then accepting a quarantine period and testing on the fifth day after arrival in order to participate in the ceremony. This still does not address the issue of accommodation in hotels, but perhaps this can be arranged separately.

We will continue to keep you informed and we will try, from this end, to see if exceptions to the quarantine regulations can be made for parents who pick up their children from the school. If we get a clear answer to this question along with any further procedural information, we will pass this on immediately. We will also arrange to present the Commencement Exercises online live as well as recorded for those who cannot be with us. Also, if need be, the ceremony may be moved to an outdoor venue depending on the circumstances at that time.

5. Upcoming

1. Spring Trimester **midterm** reporting: April 2, 2021 (reporting to be sent out by April 7, 2021)
2. **Advanced Placement® testing** on campus: May 3 - 14, 2021
3. **Year-end Awards Ceremony:** May 13, 2021 - If possible, at a local restaurant
4. **Commencement Exercises** at Kavalierhaus, Schloss Klessheim: Thursday, May 20, 2021 15:00
5. **Final Examinations** (all in grades 9-11): May 24-27, 2021 on campus
6. **Departure Days:** May 27 (as of noon), 28 and 29, 2021

Thank you again for your attention and continued support.

Yours,



Paul McLean
Headmaster
AIS-Salzburg