



OUR OPENING PLAN

2020–2021 Academic Year

Dear Families,

After a [successful campus reopening](#) for our Elementary and Middle School day students to finish the 2019–2020 academic year, we are eager to have our entire student body back on campus and very much look forward to a safe and productive fall semester. Although the ongoing pandemic will continue to pose challenges for schools around the world, we are thankful for [our ideal location](#) and are determined to provide our students with a signature TASIS experience throughout the 2020–2021 academic year.

In the presentation that follows this letter, you will find an overview of how we plan to address the following aspects of our fall opening:

- The current situation in Switzerland
- Quarantining, testing, and tracing
- Safety measures on campus
- Academic calendar
- Hybrid instruction and distance learning (if necessary)
- Travel
- Athletics

The presentation begins with an executive summary and then provides a more detailed look at each of these topics before addressing a number of frequently asked questions. We ask that you carefully review all of this information, and please understand that we may need to make adjustments to our plans as conditions in Switzerland and around the world continue to evolve.

I also invite you to visit the [Coronavirus Information page](#) on our website to gain a better understanding of how we addressed the challenges our community faced throughout the spring. There you will find an archive of all our announcements, a list of the protocols and policies we had in place, and a collection of links to expert resources.

Our Administration and Board of Directors have had many discussions this summer with leading health experts and cantonal authorities as we strive to reopen in the safest way possible this fall. Please know that all of our planning is centered on two essential questions:

- 1) How do we keep our students, teachers, and staff members as safe as possible?
- 2) How do we continue to fulfill our mission as an international school that welcomes young people from all nationalities to an educational community that fosters a passion for excellence along with mutual respect and understanding?

It is imperative that we follow all federal regulations as we reopen, and one challenge we will face at the start of the year stems from the Swiss government's recent announcement that anyone who travels to Switzerland from a [country with a high risk of infection](#) must observe a 10-day quarantine period upon arrival. The most effective way to meet this requirement is to have all boarding students who are subject to the quarantine arrive earlier than expected—and to have all other boarding students arrive later than originally planned. We understand that this necessary adjustment is not ideal for our boarding families, but as you will see in the “Quarantine, Testing, and Tracing” section of this presentation, we believe it is the safest path forward.

ARRIVAL DATES FOR BOARDING STUDENTS

Boarding students who must observe the 10-day quarantine: August 24–25

Boarding students who do not need to observe the 10-day quarantine: September 5–6

It is important to note that the quarantine requirement is based solely upon where a student has been during the two-week period prior to entering Switzerland and is not determined by his or her passport or nationality.

Students who spend at least two weeks in a country not on the high-risk list directly before they come to Switzerland will be exempt from the quarantine. Please also note that the specific countries are subject to change and that the current list can always be found on the [Federal Office of Public Health's website](#).

2020 has indeed been an extraordinary year, and we understand that more challenges lie ahead. But we are determined to push forward and know that with the support of [our amazing community](#) we can make the 2020–2021 academic year a great one. I thank you in advance for your collective resilience and flexibility as we confront this next chapter together.

Many thanks,

Christopher Nikoloff
TASIS Headmaster

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current situation in Switzerland

The Covid-19 situation has improved dramatically since infections peaked in late March, and a comprehensive report published by the non-profit Deep Knowledge Group in June identified Switzerland as the “world’s safest country” for the coronavirus.

The Swiss federal government nonetheless urges citizens to remain vigilant, and a number of prohibitions and obligations currently apply throughout the country.

[Read more about the current situation in Switzerland.](#)

Quarantining, testing, and tracing

Our top priority is to keep our community safe and healthy as we welcome students from around the world back to campus this fall. Based on their location prior to arrival in Switzerland, many of our boarding students will need to observe a mandatory 10-day quarantine, and we are asking these students to arrive on August 24 or August 25. Boarding students who do not require quarantine are expected to arrive on September 5 or September 6.

All boarding students who need to observe the quarantine will be housed in single rooms in our dormitories for the duration of the quarantine period and will have no interaction with other students while they await the results of their Covid-19 test. Results will be available within the same day of testing in most cases.

Once students have been confirmed negative for Covid-19, our intention is that they will be able to enjoy supervised access to our campus facilities. We are currently in conversation with cantonal health authorities and are optimistic that this will be the case.

To facilitate our tracking and tracing processes, students will be separated into identifiable groups throughout the quarantine period and will only interact with fellow members of their group, always following the current federal guidelines for social distancing and mask usage.

All boarding students—regardless of whether they need to observe the quarantine—will be tested for Covid-19 upon their arrival to campus. Any students who test positive or display symptoms will be isolated in a facility adjacent to campus, where they will receive excellent care from InterNursing and sCuDo, highly respected Swiss organizations that specialize in selecting and placing healthcare workers.

[Learn more about our quarantine, testing, and tracing plans.](#)

Safety measures on campus

We have spent the summer reviewing all aspects of the School for safety and quality. Our Administration and Board of Directors continue to closely monitor all local and federal guidelines and work with consultants and local authorities as we refine the safety plans we had in place when we reopened in May, including the use of thermal cameras for immediate temperature checks of all students, staff, and guests when they enter campus; the use of masks when entering and exiting campus and in all times when a safe distance of 1.5 meters cannot be observed; and the elimination of large-scale gatherings on campus.

We will ask all members of our community to sign a pledge to uphold our safety measures.

[Read more about our safety measures.](#)

Academic Calendar

We have made some adjustments to our 2020–2021 academic year calendar—including the decision to alter the structure of our Fall Academic Travel trips—but we intend to have a regular school year and to largely adhere to our original calendar.

Live classes will commence on Thursday, September 3, for all Elementary and Middle School students. In order to have the safest quarantine possible and to prevent the mixing of day and boarding students, the High School will open the year with two days of distance learning on September 3–4 and will transition to live classroom instruction on Monday, September 7.

[Learn more about the upcoming academic year.](#)

Hybrid Instruction and Distance Learning

We understand that we must be prepared to deliver instruction remotely, and our outstanding faculty will be ready to transition to a hybrid teaching model or full distance learning if necessary. We have invested significant time and resources into enhancing the remote learning experience for our students.

[Learn more about academic instruction.](#)

Travel

In place of Fall Academic Travel, we will offer students a variety of safe and invigorating weekend trips around Switzerland throughout the fall that will be chaperoned by faculty members and dorm parents. Both day and boarding students will be free to attend these trips at no additional cost.

We will continue to monitor the Federal Office of Public Health’s “Information for Travelers” page, which includes the latest guidelines and regulations from the federal government.

[Read more about travel at TASIS this fall.](#)

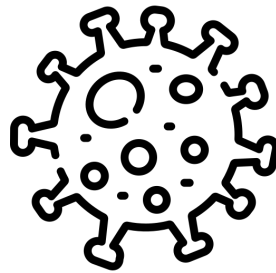
Athletics

We intend to offer sports at TASIS this fall and to compete at athletic contests within Switzerland and adjacent countries. All competitions will be within driving distance, and we will follow all federal guidelines when teams use coach buses or TASIS vans to travel to athletic facilities away from campus.

Masks will be provided to all athletes for all practices and competitions in which a social distance of 2 meters cannot be maintained, and we will observe a space requirement of 10m² per person for all of our athletic facilities.

[Learn more about our plans for athletics.](#)

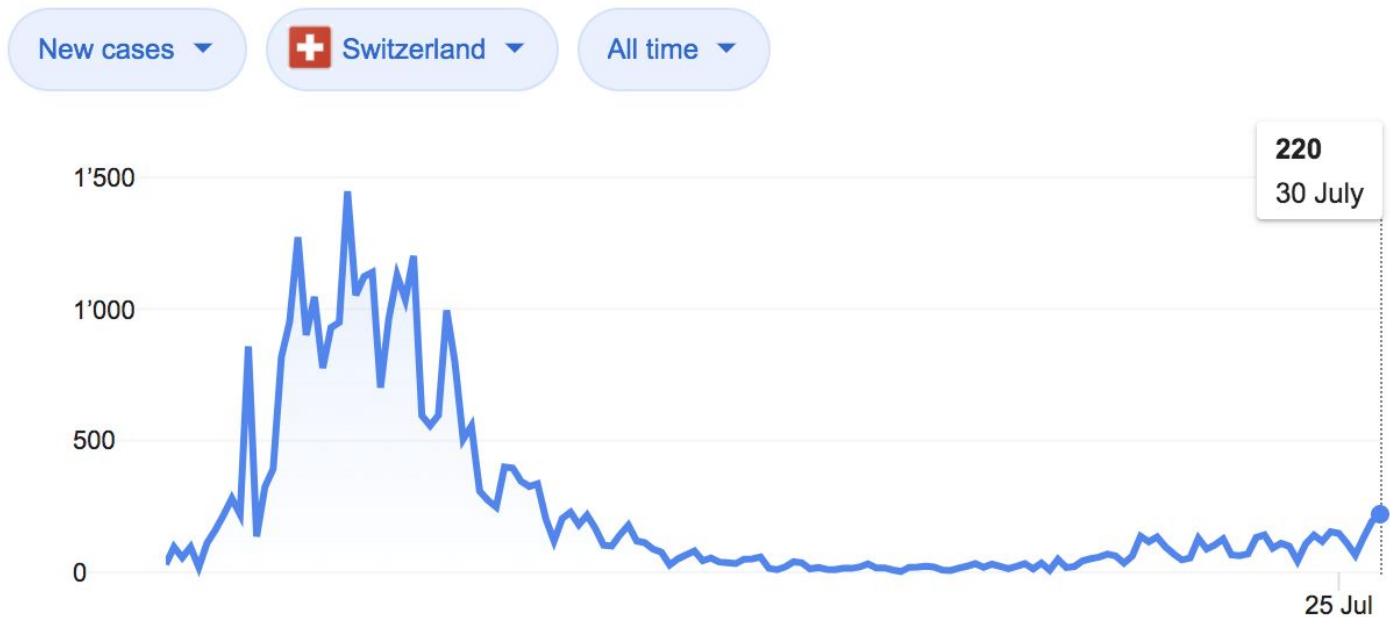
THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SWITZERLAND



Covid-19 infections in Switzerland peaked in late March and began to steadily decline by the second week of April. The infection rate has remained very low since late April, and by early June Switzerland was cited as the “[world’s safest country](#)” in a [comprehensive study](#) published by the non-profit Deep Knowledge Group.

“Switzerland and Germany achieve the #1 and #2 positions in this new special case study specifically because of their economy’s resilience, and due to the careful ways in which they are attempting to relax lockdown and economic freezing mandates in a fact and science-based manner, without sacrificing public health and safety,” said the study.

Daily change



Track the latest Covid-19 statistics for Switzerland [here](#).

The Swiss federal government urges citizens to remain vigilant despite the improved situation, and the following prohibitions and obligations currently apply throughout the country:

- Masks are compulsory on public transport and at demonstrations.

- Gatherings of more than 1000 people are banned.
- Quarantines are required for travelers from countries with a high risk of infection
- Businesses, public buildings, and gatherings are subject to precautionary measures.

The federal government has also made the following recommendations to prevent the further spread of the virus:

- Observe a distance of at least 1.5 meters.
- Wear a mask if this distance cannot be observed.
- Practice good hand hygiene.
- Get tested if you have any symptoms. (The federal government assumes all testing costs as long as the Federal Office of Public Health's criteria are met.)
- Provide contact data to allow for tracing.
- Observe the rules on isolation or quarantine.

For the latest updates about the Covid-19 situation in Switzerland, consult the [Federal Office of Public Health's website](#).

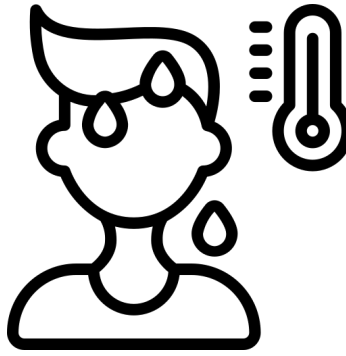
OUR QUARANTINE, TESTING, AND TRACING PLAN



We have developed a plan to keep our community safe and healthy while also keeping our boarding program fully operational during the continuing pandemic. Each year we welcome students from approximately 60 nations, and this year many students will be arriving from [countries or regions](#) that the Swiss government has designated as being “at high-risk.” These students will be subject to a mandatory 10-day quarantine upon their arrival in Switzerland, and we are now asking them to arrive on **August 24 or August 25**. All other boarding students are expected to arrive on **September 5 or September 6**.

All of our quarantine, testing, and tracing plans have been designed with two broad goals in mind:

1. It is imperative that all our students arrive to a safe campus.
2. We have a responsibility to our school community and to the local Swiss community that we do not import cases of the virus to Ticino.

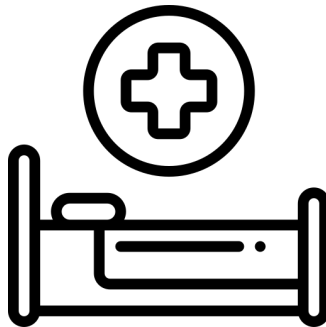


Testing

All boarding students will be tested for Covid-19 upon their arrival to campus. They will be administered a nasopharyngeal test (RT-PCR) at our on-campus testing facility in accordance with a plan developed for TESIS by the Swiss Medical Network and our consulting doctor, Dr. Vincenzo Liguori. Test results will be available within the same day in most cases, and we will inform families of the results immediately.

Our on-campus Health Center will be staffed with three full-time health professionals throughout the entire quarantine period, and we will have an isolation facility adjacent to campus for any students showing symptoms or testing positive for the virus.

The isolation facility will have 24-hour care provided by [InterNursing](#) and [sCuDo](#), highly respected Swiss organizations that specialize in selecting and placing healthcare workers in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and senior residences.



Quarantine

As mentioned above, boarding students coming from [high-risk countries](#)* are asked to arrive in Switzerland **on August 24 or August 25**. We will assist them with safe transport from their arrival point, and they will then be quarantined on our spacious campus for a 10-day period. All meals and daily activities will take place on the main TESIS campus, which will be reserved exclusively for students observing the quarantine from August 24–September 4. Boarding students who do not require quarantine are expected to arrive on **September 5 or September 6**.

The quarantined students will be housed in single rooms in our dormitories for the duration of the quarantine period and will remain isolated while they await the results of their Covid-19 test. Once they have been confirmed negative for Covid-19, our intention is that they will be able to enjoy supervised access to our campus facilities. We are currently in conversation with cantonal health authorities and are optimistic that this will be the case. Assuming that we receive approval from the canton, students will eat their meals in the Villa de Nobili dining hall and participate in safe and fun activities on campus that will be coordinated by our dedicated

Residential Life team. While stringent safety measures will of course be in place, we are certain these students will be very comfortable.

All quarantined students will move from their temporary single rooms to their permanent rooms over the weekend of September 5–6, as our remaining boarding students arrive. There will be a maximum of two students per room for the duration of the 2020–2021 academic year.

* The list of high-risk countries is subject to change, and we will notify any affected families if new countries are added. Please also note that we will continue to observe all [Swiss safety guidelines](#) and may need to make adjustments to our quarantine protocols as the current situation evolves.

A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ARRIVAL

We understand that travel restrictions and the 10-day quarantine requirement will make it difficult for some parents to accompany their children to Switzerland. Please know that we will make sure these students are safely transported from their arrival point to campus, practicing appropriate distancing and mask usage en route. Our Admissions Office will be in touch with each boarding family in the coming weeks to confirm travel plans.

Our *in loco parentis* responsibilities remain our highest priority, and we will of course make sure that all students receive an exceptional level of care from the moment they arrive.



Tracking and Tracing

As noted above, all activities and meals for all quarantined students will be limited to our main campus. Students observing the quarantine will have limited contact with one another, always following the [current federal guidelines](#) for social distancing and mask usage. To facilitate our tracking and tracing processes, students will be separated into identifiable groups and will only interact with fellow members of their group.

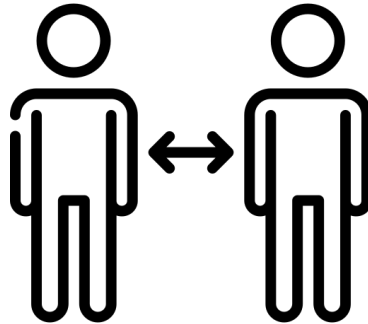
It is important to reiterate that our quarantined students **will not have any contact** with boarding students who are not quarantining or with members of our day student population for the duration of the quarantine period. Quarantined students will have limited contact with members of the TASIS staff, who will model proper social distancing and mask usage as necessary.

To complement our tracking and tracing efforts, all TASIS students and employees will be strongly encouraged to download the [Swiss Covid-19 App](#) upon their arrival. We will rely upon the Canton medical office to take the lead in all contact tracing efforts as the year progresses.

Clarification of Who Needs to Quarantine

It is important to note that the quarantine requirement is not determined by a student's passport or nationality—it is based solely upon where he or she has been during the two-week period prior to entering Switzerland. Students who have spent any time in a [high-risk country](#) in the two weeks prior to their arrival in Switzerland must observe the quarantine. Students who have spent the previous two weeks in countries not on the high-risk list are exempt from the quarantine—regardless of what their home country is.

SAFETY MEASURES ON CAMPUS



We have spent the summer reviewing all aspects of the School for safety and quality. We are closely monitoring local and federal guidelines and working with consultants and local authorities as we refine the [safety plans we had in place when we reopened in May](#). With the understanding that we will continue to fine-tune our safety protocols as conditions change in the fall and beyond, below are several areas of emphasis:

- Use of thermal cameras for immediate temperature checks of all students, staff, and guests when they enter campus
- Use of masks when entering and exiting campus and during high-traffic periods, such as drop-off and pick-up times
- Use of masks in all times when safe distancing must be reduced
- Procedures to ensure the safe entering and exiting of classrooms and other common spaces
- Safe distancing of at least 1.5 meters between students in classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, common areas, and playgrounds
- Use of plexiglass in classrooms and dining halls to further reduce the risk of infection
- Assigned seating in classrooms and in the dining hall for contact tracing
- Eliminating large-scale gatherings such as assemblies for the time being
- Use of the [Swiss Covid-19 App](#) to help with contact tracing
- Restricted access to campus and dormitories
- Regulations to ensure more privacy, assigned bathrooms, and enhanced cleaning procedures in dormitories
- Education campaigns and campus signage to reinforce proper hygiene and safe distancing

We will share our finalized protocols with all students and their families in advance of our opening and will ask all members of our community to sign a pledge to uphold our safety measures.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

As we have explained above and due to the mandatory 10-day quarantine imposed by Switzerland, we will begin the year with many of our boarding students in quarantine. In order to have the safest quarantine possible and to prevent the mixing of day and boarding students, the High School will begin the year with distance learning for the first two days of school: **September 3–4**. Live classroom instruction for the High School will begin on **Monday, September 7**. This will ensure that all students needing to quarantine will be cleared before the High School goes live with all day and boarding students.

The Elementary School and Middle School will begin live classes on campus on **Thursday, September 3**, as planned. These students will have no contact with any boarding students who are finishing up their quarantine.

Due to the unpredictable nature of this extraordinary and ever-changing pandemic, we have made the difficult decision to restructure [Fall Academic Travel](#), which was originally scheduled for October 26–30. We have determined that it will not be prudent to send our students and faculty members on trips around the world just over three months from now. We also believe that due to the challenges we will face at the start of the year, it is in the best interests of our students to restructure our academic calendar in a way that maximizes classroom instruction. The net result is that each division will now have 2–3 more instructional days than originally planned.

Please take note of the following changes to our 2020–2021 academic year calendar:

- There will now be **no classes on Monday, October 12**, for the Elementary School, which will align all divisions for that three-day weekend.
- All three divisions will hold regular classes on **Monday, October 26–Wednesday, October 28**, in lieu of Fall Academic Travel.
- All three divisions will have **no classes on Thursday, October 29, and Friday, October 30**.

[See the Updated 2020-2021 Academic Year Calendar](#)

HYBRID INSTRUCTION AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Aside from the changes discussed above, we intend to have a regular school year on campus and to adhere to our original calendar. But as we have learned from experience, we need to be prepared to deliver instruction remotely in case the academic year is interrupted for a single student, a group of students, or the whole school. Depending on the circumstances, [our first-rate faculty will be prepared](#) to transition to a hybrid teaching model or return to full distance learning. We have invested significant time and resources into enhancing the remote learning experience for our students.

Hybrid instruction consists of a combination of live and distance learning. In a hybrid model, school is still in session, but some students may need to access the classes remotely through video conferencing. For instance, if a student needs to arrive on campus later in the year or temporarily remain in isolation, he or she will be able to follow the live classes through video conferencing or recording sessions.

In the unlikely event of a campus closure, we will be prepared to deploy a full distance learning model—as [we did this spring](#) but with ongoing refinements and improvements.

TRAVEL

As noted above, we have restructured the Fall Academic Travel period in order to minimize risk and maximize our classroom instruction days. We will instead be offering students a variety of safe and invigorating weekend trips around Switzerland throughout the fall. At this time we are aiming to offer two or three weekend trips to our High School students and one weekend trip to our Middle School students. These trips will be chaperoned by faculty members and dorm parents.

We continue to monitor the Federal Office of Public Health's [Information for Travelers](#) page, which includes the latest guidelines and regulations from the federal government. All passengers on public transportation are now required to wear masks, and we will require all students and drivers in TASIS vans to wear masks.

Independent student travel on non-closed weekends may be permitted if a student's parents make all the arrangements with respect to all current federal regulations. Our Deans' Office will review requests with families on a case-by-case basis.

ATHLETICS

With regard to our Athletics Program, we plan to follow the [Swiss federal guidelines for sports](#). As of June 8, these guidelines allow training sessions and competitions for all the sports [we currently offer](#).

Our hope is to maintain the current structure for our competitive teams that travel within Switzerland and to adjacent countries. All competitions will be within driving distance, and we will follow the guidelines discussed above when teams use coach buses or TASIS vans to travel to athletic facilities away from campus. We will also have a waiver/permission form that must be signed by each parent and student at the beginning of the fall season if students wish to travel to the different tournament destinations.

During all practices and competitions, masks will be provided to all athletes for any situations in which a social distance of 2 meters cannot be maintained. We will also observe a space requirement of 10m² per person for all of our athletic facilities, including the Palestra, Palestrina, Fitness Room, and Dance Studio. All equipment will be sanitized before and after each use, and all facilities will be ventilated at least once every hour.

SUMMARY OF KEY DATES

August 24–25

Boarding students coming from [countries on the high-risk list](#) arrive.

September 3

The Elementary School and Middle School begin live classroom instruction.

September 3–4

The High School has two days of distance learning (all classes held remotely).

September 5–6

All other boarding students arrive.

September 7

The High School begins live classroom instruction.

October 12

All three divisions do not have classes.

October 26–28

All three divisions have regular classes.

October 29–30

All three divisions do not have classes.

2020–2021 Academic Year Calendar

FAQs



We are sure that our families have many questions that have not been addressed above. We have prepared a list of frequently asked questions and responses below. Please do not hesitate to [contact our Admissions Office](#) with any other questions.

Do students have to remain in quarantine even after they test negative for Covid-19?

Yes, the quarantine requirement is independent from testing results. Anyone arriving in Switzerland from a high-risk country or territory must complete the full 10 days.

What will you do if a student tests positive for Covid-19?

We will work with local medical authorities and follow their guidance for any potential or confirmed case of Covid-19. Any student who has tested positive for Covid-19 or has demonstrated symptoms and is awaiting test results will be placed in our isolation facility and receive 24-hour care from skilled healthcare workers provided by InterNursing and sCuDo—under the supervision of Dr. Vincenzo Liguori. Students will remain in this facility until they are cleared to return by medical authorities.

Contract tracing will be carried out by local authorities in the event of any positive test. The Canton medical office tracks and informs all close contacts and implements other necessary measures, determining how far contact tracing goes depending on the specifics of each case.

What will you do if a faculty or staff member tests positive for Covid-19?

We will follow the same isolation and contact tracing protocols that we would in the case of a student testing positive. Of course, faculty and staff members (as well as day students) can isolate themselves in their homes.

Will you also test day students, faculty and staff members, and non-quarantined boarding students for Covid-19?

We will test all boarding students soon after their arrival and again throughout the fall any time symptoms are exhibited. Day students, faculty members, and staff members will be tested by local medical authorities when they deem it necessary.

Will you do any form of antibody testing?

We do not intend to test for antibodies. The clinical effectiveness of Covid-19 antibody testing is unclear and is not currently recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Will you still hold Family Weekend this fall?

Due to visitor restrictions currently in place in Switzerland and the unpredictability of this situation, we are looking into ways to restructure Family Weekend. As of now we intend to rely on remote parent-teacher conferences and make other similar adjustments, but we will share specific details in the fall.

Will families be able to visit their children on campus?

In an effort to preserve community health and safety, we intend to limit visits from family as much as possible for the time being. Parents will be asked to contact the School ahead of time if they plan to visit.

What changes are you making to your dormitories this year?

We will have no more than two students per room, and we have made renovations to increase the number of bathrooms in some of our dormitories. Many dormitory rooms now have private bathrooms, and any remaining communal bathrooms will be assigned to a very small group of students and will only be used by one student at a time. We have added a host of safety protocols to minimize contact and have introduced enhanced sanitization routines and disinfecting protocols across the board.

Will any adjustments be made to this year's tuition or room and board fees?

We intend to offer our students a full year of academic instruction and do not expect to make any adjustments to our tuition or fees. We will revisit this in the unlikely event of a campus closure.

Will class sizes be reduced this year?

Our class sizes are generally on the small side to begin with, so we do not anticipate needing to make any major adjustments this year. We have removed or altered furniture where necessary and added plexiglass between desks and in the dining room. We will introduce measures around entering and exiting classrooms as well as masking as necessary.

What will be done to enhance safety measures in dining areas?

We will adhere to all current federal, cantonal, and local guidelines for dining and food service restrictions. This includes maintaining a space of at least 1.5 meters between each table and making adjustments to our schedule

in order to limit the number of people who can be in each dining hall at a given time. All diners must also respect the 1.5-meter distancing requirement when in line and approaching seating.

Meals will be pre-portioned, and only the kitchen staff—who will of course be wearing masks and gloves at all times—will be allowed to distribute food.

How will you support your students' social and emotional well-being?

We have a full-time PK–12 School Counselor and a part-time Elementary School Counselor, and they will be available to meet with students at any time. They will also be proactively leading sessions on social and emotional well-being throughout the fall.

In addition, our robust Advisor Program has been adjusted to ensure that advisors see each of their advisees at least twice a week, and our caring dorm parents will be checking in with boarding students each evening to ensure that they are doing well both mentally and physically. Their efforts will be bolstered by ongoing support from our administration, faculty, and nursing team. We believe that it takes a total team effort to run a successful boarding program even in a “normal” year, so we are well-positioned to provide our students all the support they need.

Will students be allowed to have dances and other social events this fall?

We realize that socializing and community are critical components of the student experience. We will continue to provide social opportunities while adhering to local and federal guidelines on gatherings.