



Dear BUA Community,

Two weeks ago, we [announced a COVID-19 vaccination requirement](#) for our students. I am grateful for -- and not surprised by -- the response of this community; in the intervening days, the great majority of our students and families have uploaded evidence of vaccination, and many of you have sent supportive notes thanking us for taking this step. Thank you.

I'm writing today to give you a fuller sense of our plans for COVID protocols for the coming school year.

It is disappointing, but it is important to be clear-eyed about the fact that the epidemiological situation now is worse than it was in the spring and early summer. The rise of the highly transmissible Delta variant and other emerging variants has made it irresponsible to return to our pre-pandemic "normal," even with a vaccine requirement in place. There is a natural desire among all of us to be done with the pandemic; unfortunately, this pandemic is not done with us.

Over the summer, we have been working closely with our partners at BU's Medical Advisory Group and our Parent Health Advisory Team. Together, we have tracked the news and reviewed the data. And we have taken a fresh look at our protocols for the fall.

The good news is that we know what works, based on the data and our recent experience. Last year, we set two overarching priorities: (1) keeping our community safe and (2) maximizing our students' ability to learn in person. I am fiercely proud of the fact that with the partnership of our parents, students, faculty, staff, and colleagues, we finished the school year with two positive student tests of the thousands of tests our students took, no transmission on campus, the great majority of our students learning in person, and no days lost to the pandemic. In that most unusual year, our students had an experience that "felt like school." That's what they deserve.

Our priorities this year remain the same: learning in person in a way that keeps us all safe. We will start the year with a **fully in-person learning experience, five days per week**. To minimize risk of transmission, we will retain many of the protocols that kept us in school last year, including indoor masking, hand washing/sanitizing, enhanced ventilation, attestation, and testing. Adding the vaccine requirement gives us both added protection and the latitude to begin the year without the strict six-foot distancing requirement in place for our classrooms (although we encourage distancing generally and will still require it in specific instances).

And we must stay humble. These protocols, even when perfectly executed, minimize the risk of transmission; they do not eliminate that risk. BU's testing program means that we have more data about our population at our fingertips than any high school in the country. As things change in our community and more broadly, we will adapt -- doing everything we can to give our students a joyful and healthy school year. We will also keep communicating with you, like we did last year, about positive cases and changes in protocols.

[BUA COVID Protocols Webpage](#)

Full details about our revised COVID protocols and procedures can be found on our [BUA COVID Protocols webpage](#). This site will be updated regularly throughout the year, and we will inform you of substantial changes. While we have summarized some of the most salient points below, we ask that you please review this page before the start of the school year.

Community Town Hall Meetings

BUA will host a community-wide [Zoom Town Hall](#) meeting this **Sunday, August 15 at 8:00 p.m.**, at which our parent Health Advisory Team -- Dr. Nidhi Lal, Dr. Mark Poznansky, and Dr. John Quackenbush -- and several members of BU's Medical Advisory Group -- Dr. Judy Platt and Dr. David Hamer -- will share their perspective on COVID-19 vaccine safety and efficacy for adolescents, offer thoughts about emerging variants, talk about other protocols in place for the school year, and answer your questions. You can [register for the Town Hall here](#) and submit questions beforehand. Parents and students are encouraged to join.

On the evening of **Sunday, August 29 at 8:00 p.m.**, students are invited to join a [Back-to- School Zoom Town Hall](#) with me, Dr. White, and Mr. Dettorre, at which we will answer questions about BUA's COVID protocols and anything else on students' minds in advance of the start of school. Students can register and submit their questions in advance [here](#).

Key Protocols Continued from 2020-21

Despite the vaccination requirement, the transmissibility of Delta and other variants have led us to continue the overlapping protective measures that kept this community learning in person last year. Many more details about these and other protocols can be found on the [COVID Protocols webpage](#).

- **Indoor mask wearing:** Face coverings must be worn at all times by everyone inside all BU and BUA facilities. Although face coverings are not required outside on the BUA or BU campus, it is recommended that individuals wear one in crowds or in situations when physical distance cannot be maintained. Students, employees, and visitors are expected to provide their own face covering. BUA will maintain a supply of extra masks should they be needed. For those who are unsure about mask usage, here's a [useful video](#) from BU on choosing the best face covering and how to wear a face mask properly.
- **Daily health attestation:** BUA students, faculty, and staff will be required to participate in a daily attestation questionnaire via BU's secure proprietary health portal. Beginning Wednesday, August 18, students will receive an automated email every morning directing them to complete the daily health attestation, or they can log into [Patient Connect](#) to access the questionnaire. Students will answer questions related to COVID-19 symptoms and exposure; we suggest that students complete the daily health attestation with a parent/guardian present and inform them if they answer "yes" to having symptoms. It is critical that students respond honestly to the questions. Selecting "yes" to having symptoms necessitates that the student remain at home and await a follow-up conversation with a BU Healthway triage specialist. The staff member will contact the student directly. Parents/guardians should notify the school immediately (617-353-9000 or academy@bu.edu) if the student is asked to stay home due to completing the symptom

attestation.

- **Twice-Weekly Testing:** All members of the BU community including BUA students, faculty, and staff, will participate in the University's COVID-19 screening and testing program and be required to test twice per week (vs. the weekly requirement at the University more broadly). The testing program is free to all community members, who will be tested on reentry to campus and regularly throughout the year. All students must complete their testing at 808 Commonwealth Avenue, diagonally across from BUA. Negative results will be released electronically through the health portal. Students who test positive will be contacted by Student Health Services once contact is made with a parent/guardian. Student Health Services will share test results with others at BU including designated contacts at BUA strictly on a need-to-know basis and in support of the student's care during recovery.
- **Positive Tests and Quarantine:** Students who receive a positive test result will follow the same protocols as last year: individuals must self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms or from the test date if no symptoms are present, and be symptom free for at least 24 hours without medication before returning to campus. BU protocols do not require a negative test prior to returning to campus, assuming the individual has followed state guidelines; however the individual will need to be cleared by a member of the BU Healthway staff in order to return to campus.
- **Hand washing and sanitizing:** Hand washing and sanitizing stations are available throughout our building and the campus. Students are asked to wipe down learning spaces before and after class.
- **Ventilation:** Enhanced ventilation is in place in all BUA classrooms, including free-standing negative air filtration units equipped with HEPA filters.
- **Lunch:** Ninth- and tenth-grade students may bring their own lunch or purchase food from the George Sherman Union (GSU). They may eat in BUA's Sargent Gym or in one of the designated outdoor green spaces -- not in the GSU or in the GSU Academy Room. We strongly encourage distancing while eating and will monitor those spaces accordingly. Special thanks to our Student Council, which advocated for a continuation of the Green Space program.

New and Revised Protocols

The following protocols represent changes from last year.

- **Vaccination Requirement:** BUA requires all students ages 12+ to receive a COVID-19 vaccination prior to the start of the 2021-2022 academic year. Medical and religious exemptions to this policy will be accommodated. Faculty and staff are subject to the same requirement. For more information, please see the [email sent to families on July 27](#).
- **Close Contacts and Quarantine:** According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), close contacts are those individuals who have been within six feet of a COVID-19 positive individual for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period or who had direct contact with infectious secretions of that person while not wearing the

recommended personal protective equipment. If an individual is identified as a close contact, they will be notified by a contact tracer from Boston University (or by a local board of health if their test was conducted off campus).

If a close contact is fully vaccinated and asymptomatic, they will be exempt from close contact quarantine and may return to class, but must be tested daily on any day they are on campus during an 8-day period following exposure. If a close contact is not vaccinated, or cannot provide proof of vaccination, they must quarantine for 14 days after the exposure date unless they receive a negative test result after day 8 of quarantine and are symptom free.

- **Visitor Policy:** A limited number of non-essential visitors will be allowed into the BUA building at the school's discretion. All visitors will be required to wear a mask indoors. All indoor visitors who will be coming into contact with students will be required to complete a health attestation form, which, among other things, will ask the visitor to attest that they are fully vaccinated. Indoor visits are by appointment only. Parents/guardians are encouraged to call the front desk (617-353-9000) with questions/concerns or to schedule a meeting.
- **Athletics, Theater, Vocal Music, Instrumental Music:** BUA will return to normal activities in these areas. Students involved in athletics will be required to wear masks indoors. Students engaged in theater, singing, and instrumental music will also be required to wear masks indoors. The school will procure and distribute specially-designed masks and other protective equipment for singers and musicians who play brass and woodwind instruments. All music classes will be held in the Black Box with distancing measures in place.
- **Full, In-Person Academic Schedule:** Classes will meet in person five days per week, implementing the new [BUA Schedule](#) with later start times and fewer class meetings per day. Sample schedules for each grade are available [here](#). For an overview of the schedule and rationale, please see last year's [blog post](#).
- **Limited Learning from Home:** Students who are at home due to a positive test or as a result of reporting symptoms on an attestation form will have access to video recordings of course content and potentially live streams. We are in the process of finalizing the logistical details and appreciate your patience as we work those through. Like BU, BUA will not offer any other learn-from-home options as we return to in-person learning.
- **Relaxed Distancing Requirements and Movement through Building:** BUA will no longer enforce distancing in classroom spaces, with the exception of singing and instrumental music classes. Classroom furniture has returned to seminar-table configuration, with all new classroom furniture this year. We encourage students to practice distancing where possible. Distancing is required for lunch in the gym and green spaces. There will no longer be one-way hallways and staircases. Nevertheless, movement within the building should be deliberate, with the aim of minimizing congestion or crowding in shared spaces.
- **Lockers and Mailboxes:** Students will have access to lockers and mailboxes.
- **Outdoor Events:** We will return to hosting outdoor events on campus, which will include visitors. Masks and attestations will not be required, but anyone is welcome to wear a mask.

Policies Under Review

In collaboration with our BU and parent health expert partners, we are currently reviewing plans for the following pieces. Thank you for your patience, and we will update you in the coming weeks.

- All-school meetings
- Large-scale on-campus parent events
- Student trips and large-scale indoor social events

I wish we were not starting a third year of school that will be impacted by the pandemic. At the same time, I cannot imagine a school better equipped to adapt and thrive. With your continued partnership, I'm confident that our students will have a wonderful year, and that we will again be a model for schools around the country. Please feel free to [reach out to us](#) with questions or concerns; we are here to support your family as we set out together in the new school year.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Kolovos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" being the most prominent.

Chris Kolovos
Head of School