



July 27, 2021

Dear BUA Families,

I hope this note finds you and your loved ones happy and healthy. While there are still a good number of summer days ahead, here at BUA we are preparing to welcome our new and returning students to campus and could not be more excited for the year to come.

I am writing to share an important update about BUA's COVID vaccination policy.

Last year at this time, we were planning for an unprecedented school year. We prioritized in-person learning, confident that we could provide joyful in-person learning to our students and committed to doing so in a way that kept our community safe. Looking back now at a year where the vast majority of our students learned in person, where we lost no in-person days to COVID, where there were only two student positive (asymptomatic) tests out of the thousands of weekly COVID tests our BUA students took, and where there was no community spread from those cases, I could not be more proud of what we accomplished together. Our students did their part, driven by a desire to be in school and be together. Our families were gracious, patient, and flexible. And BU was an extraordinary partner.

Now, as we enter another year, we ask for your understanding and partnership once again as we work together to give our students the experience they deserve.

In April, Boston University [President Robert Brown announced](#) that all BU students would be required to be vaccinated before returning to campus for the fall 2021 semester. For a number of reasons, including the fact that the Pfizer vaccine had not yet been authorized for 12–15-year-olds, we decided in conjunction with our partners at the University not to automatically extend that requirement to BUA students, but instead spend some time studying the question and coming to a decision that was right for our community.

In the intervening months, we have worked closely with our partners at BU's Medical Advisory Group and our BUA-parent Health Advisory Team. The Pfizer vaccine was authorized for use in 12–15-year-olds on May 10, so we now have ten weeks of data from around the world for this age group. We have reviewed the studies, with a special focus on understanding the implications for our students: the safety of the vaccine for adolescents and associated side effects; the risk posed to our students by emerging variants; and the efficacy of the vaccine in this age group. We are now in a position to share a policy for next year.

Vaccine Requirement

BUA will require all students ages 12+ to receive a COVID-19 vaccination prior to the start of the 2021-2022 academic year (please see the note below about timing of vaccination). As we do for other required vaccinations, we will accommodate medical and religious exemptions to this policy. Faculty and staff will be subject to the same requirement.

We come to this decision because we believe it is a necessary step to keep our students safe while we move back to a “normal” school routine. Our vision for the fall is 100% in-person learning without the distancing requirements we and so many others implemented last year. We want our students to sit together around a seminar table in English class and work side-by-side in chemistry labs. We want to return to singing together, acting together, and playing sports together. It is increasingly clear, particularly in light of Delta and other variants, that high vaccination rates are a key — perhaps *the* key — to keeping our students safe and engaging with each other joyfully. With this policy, we join many of our peer independent schools around the area and the country who have reached the same decision.

The vaccine is only one part of that strategy. In line with BU policy, mask wearing will still be required indoors in the fall. Our students will continue regular (likely weekly) testing as well; we are tremendously grateful to BU for building its own testing facilities last summer and providing our students access to testing beyond what is available at any high school in the country. And we are in the process of reviewing our other protocols in light of emerging data. We will share more details in the coming weeks.

We know that many of our students have already received the vaccine. There may be some families, though, for whom a requirement like this raises questions or concerns, and we understand that. If you have concerns about the policy broadly or about what it means for your family, I invite you to please reach out to me directly (ckolovos@bu.edu) for a conversation.

Timing of Vaccination

Classes begin for all students on Thursday, September 2. Given the guidance that the vaccine is most effective two weeks after the final dose, students would ideally receive that dose by August 19. We know that a final dose by August 19 (or, for some, even by September 2) may not be possible for all families given travel schedules, the wait time between doses, and the short lead time of this announcement. We understand the logistical difficulties and will be flexible with the timeline as we all adjust to the shifting realities of the pandemic. If you have particular concerns about the timing and would like to talk it through, please reach out to our Director of Operations & Finance, Derek Dettorre (dettorre@bu.edu).

Uploading Proof of Vaccination

In advance of the start of the school year, or as soon as practicable thereafter, we ask that all families upload proof of vaccination in two places: (1) the BU Patient Connect portal and (2) SchoolDoc — the BUA system where you upload all other vaccination information. In each system, there is an option to indicate a request for a medical or religious exemption. We realize that uploading to two systems adds a layer of complexity; thank you for your partnership and understanding. We are working to make this process more efficient in the future.

To upload proof of vaccination to **BU Patient Connect**, **students** should:

- Visit [Healthway](#) > Students, and log in to Patient Connect using their BU username and password (same as BU email credentials without the @bu.edu). If they have trouble logging in, please contact BUA’s Director of Operations and Finance, Derek Dettorre, dettorre@bu.edu.
- Click the Medical Clearances menu option, then click Update in the COVID clearance row

- Click Upload to upload an image of their COVID-19 vaccine documentation, ensuring that the administered dates are clearly visible
- Enter each appointment date, indicate the vaccine manufacturer, and click Done

To file an exemption request for medical or religious reasons through Patient Connect, choose Request for COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption from the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) message options. If you are unable to obtain a vaccine before arriving on campus, choose “I request an extension to be able to receive my COVID vaccine once I arrive in Boston” from the “COVID-19 (Coronavirus)” message options. More details are available [here](#). More information about how to use Patient Connect is available [here](#), including step-by-step visual instructions for uploading proof of vaccination. For help with this system, please email healthwayhelp@bu.edu.

To upload proof of vaccination to **SchoolDoc**, **parents/guardians** should:

- Log into their [SchoolDoc](#) account
- Click on the Enrollment Paperwork section in the middle of the screen, then choose the immunizations section from the list on the right side of the screen
- Scroll to the bottom of the page and select whether the student has received the Covid-19 vaccination or not
- If yes, continue on to upload your student’s vaccination documentation and enter the dates for dose 1 and 2, and then click confirm. If the student has only received one dose, please enter the expected date of the second dose, or leave that space blank if your student has received the J&J vaccine.
- If no, please confirm that the student has submitted a request for and received a medical or religious exemption from BU through the BU Patient Connect portal (the student must first receive an exemption through BU Patient Connect before completing this step).

For assistance uploading to SchoolDoc, please contact Derek Dettorre, dettorre@bu.edu.

Booking a Vaccine Appointment

If you have not done so already, you can [book a vaccination appointment](#) at a MassVax site, authorized pharmacy, or regional health collaborative.

Town Hall with BU and BUA-Parent Experts

We invite you to a community-wide Zoom Town Hall meeting on **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. Thank you to that extraordinary team for their support, not just in working with us to reach this decision but for all that they have done over the past sixteen months as we have navigated the pandemic together.

You can [register for the Town Hall here](#) and submit questions beforehand.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and understanding as we work together to create a joyful, safe, world-class learning experience for our students. We can't wait for the year to start. As always, please feel free to [reach out to us](#) with any questions.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Kolovos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Chris Kolovos
Head of School