



12/29/21

Dear BUA Families,

I hope that this note finds your families happy and healthy during another unusual holiday season. Given the long duration of the pandemic, it is critical that we find ways to be together and mark these special moments. The rapid spread of the new variant has made that challenging again, which is frustrating. However you and your loved ones are celebrating these days, I send you warm wishes from my family and the entire BUA family.

Before break, you received a [message containing several important COVID updates](#): a booster requirement, the elimination of the daily attestation, new protocols for what to do if symptomatic, steps BUA is taking for the mental health of our students, and guidance about the return from winter break. Thank you for reviewing that information.

I'm sure you are reading reports of schools and universities beginning the term in January remotely. That is not our path. Barring something unforeseen, **BUA will resume classes in person next week**. In-person learning is core to the experience. Students want to be together and deserve to be, as long as we can do that safely. We are committed to returning in person and maintaining that practice as long as we can. Our protocols, BU's testing infrastructure, and the wonderful efforts by our students and families make that possible.

Things change quickly. Given the trajectory of the Omicron variant, new guidance from national health authorities, and in consultation with BU health experts and BUA's Health Advisory Team, I'm writing with some updates and to anticipate some questions you may have.

Negative Test Required Before Returning to Classes

We are making a small but important change to our return-to-school protocols. As you know, BUA classes resume on Wednesday, January 5. Previously, we had *strongly recommended* that students have a negative COVID PCR test in hand before returning. Given the shifting epidemiological conditions, we will now *require* that all students have a negative PCR test result before returning to classes. BU testing collection sites are closed on January 2 but will be operating with normal hours (8 a.m. to 9 p.m.) on Monday, January 3 and Tuesday, January 4. **All students attending BUA classes on Wednesday, January 5 must test at BU on Monday or in the morning on Tuesday** to ensure that they receive a result by the time school begins on Wednesday. Students can schedule those tests through the normal channels; given that BU undergraduates will not yet be on campus, there should be plenty of testing slots available. BUA seniors participating in the January on-campus thesis writing term must abide by these

guidelines; those seniors who will not be returning to campus until later in January must have a negative PCR test before their first day back.

We realize that for some students and families, this requirement may represent a hardship. That could be due to travel plans, a long commute into BU, family or work commitments, or other reasons. We want to work with you. If it is not possible for the student to come to BU for a test on Monday or early Tuesday, we ask that you please arrange for a PCR test from another testing site and share that result with us at academy@bu.edu before classes on Wednesday. If, for whatever reason, that is not possible, please email us at academy@bu.edu, and we can talk through your particular situation and possible alternatives.

Students who test positive should stay home and notify the Healthway team at 617-353-0550.

Staying Home When Symptomatic

As always, and particularly now, it is critical that students stay home when symptomatic. We will share regular reminders to that effect in place of the daily attestations. As we shared before break, here are the new protocols when a student is symptomatic.

If a student is experiencing symptoms, we ask that:

- the student stay home
- the family contact the front desk to report the absence by 8:00 a.m. by calling 617-353-9000 or emailing academy@bu.edu
- the student or family call Healthway (617-353-0550) to discuss symptoms, testing, and other next steps with a nurse OR the student directly schedule a COVID test at the symptomatic testing center (see below) and not return to school until receiving a negative test result

Symptomatic students will soon have the option to directly schedule same-day tests – without talking to Healthway first – at the symptomatic testing center in the [Health Services Annex](#). They schedule those tests using the same portal they use to schedule asymptomatic tests. Symptomatic test results are generally returned the same day.

On days when students are out for any COVID-related reasons, we are happy to set up the technology to allow that student – if they are feeling well enough – to follow along in their BUA courses by Zoom, as long as the front desk is notified by 8:00 a.m. As always, teachers will be flexible with students who miss classes and will make time to work with those students outside of class.

Shortening the Isolation/Quarantine Length

The [CDC recently recommended](#) shortening the isolation period for those who test positive to five days (and a similar quarantine length for certain close contacts). BUA will follow suit,

moving to a five-day isolation period, along with the University and in line with guidance from the state Department of Public Health.

Please visit [this page](#) for details about these and other school COVID protocols.

We weathered last winter's COVID spike with very few cases and no disruption to school. While this variant is different, we know what works. We will remain flexible, using all the tools at our disposal to keep our community safe and together. As always, please feel free to [reach out to us](#) with any questions. We are grateful for your ongoing partnership and support, and wish you and your families a happy, healthy New Year.

Warmly,

Chris Kolovos