



# SAINT ANN'S SCHOOL

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Head of School

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Dear Saint Ann's Community,

For the past four years the *Washington Post* has been reminding us that “democracy dies in darkness.” On Wednesday the life of our democracy was threatened in broad daylight when a violent mob, incited and encouraged by the president of the United States, invaded the United States Capitol, attempting to disrupt the affirmation by Congress of our presidential election. To witness the presence of the Confederate flag—an explicit symbol of insurrection and white supremacy—within the Capitol; to observe the differential preparation and response of law enforcement to yesterday’s insurrectionary protest compared with the reaction to largely peaceful protests following the murder of George Floyd; to see the impunity with which members of the mob acted during their invasion of the Capitol, as though certain that their actions would have no repercussions—these and many other aspects of what transpired once again reveal disturbing truths about power, privilege, and race that must be confronted.

For our school this is yet one more reminder of the importance of the work that we do to educate and inspire young people. In our response to injustice, or hate, or violence, or racism we declare who we are. When we confront and disrupt that which we find abhorrent, we define and defend our community. In this moment we seek to give our students the intellectual, artistic and emotional tools they need to understand, to think, to listen, to act, and to create. That work endures.

## Health and Safety

### Covid Testing and Confirmed Cases

- On Tuesday, we sent 1,075 saliva samples out for pool testing.
- Over the course of the day yesterday, we identified three positive Covid cases through that process, one lower middle school student and two teaching employees. Our nurses followed up with the employees and the family of the student to advise them on next steps, including that they should notify any close contacts outside of school.
- Separately, our nurses were notified over the two week break period of two students, one in high school and one in lower school, who had tested positive.
- Those five individuals are self-isolating and we have notified the Department of Health. The nurses will continue to check in on how they are feeling and how we can best support them. We wish them all a speedy recovery.
- At this time, we do not have reason to believe any other community members are affected.

I am deeply grateful for everyone’s cooperation with our testing plan this week and your continued support of the wellbeing of our entire community. While news of *any* member of that community being sick is unwelcome, we are relieved that the rate of infection among our students, teachers and staff continues to remain low. We will resume our standard surveillance testing protocol next week, through which we are testing approximately one-quarter of our in-person students and staff each week.

As a reminder, we are required to report all confirmed cases of Covid among students or employees, regardless of whether those individuals are attending school or work in person or remotely. Please continue to report any confirmed cases to our nurses at [nurses@saintannsny.org](mailto:nurses@saintannsny.org) as soon as possible regardless of whether you or your child are coming to school in person.



## New Variant and Ongoing Vigilance

It has never been more important than it is now to maintain caution and vigilance. Covid has claimed the lives of more than 360,000 Americans and nearly two million people globally. We are closely tracking news and public health advisories related to the new Covid variant identified in the U.K. and found in New York this week for any impact on our ongoing planning. As positivity rates continue to rise in New York City, we must all continue to do our part to slow the spread—diligence in masking, distancing, washing our hands, avoiding indoor gatherings, and staying home when we are sick. We are also asking everyone to limit non-school in-person extracurricular activities as much as possible. I urge everyone not to become complacent and to take extra precautions this weekend as we look forward to resuming in-person school next week.

## Exposure Quarantine Change

We also want to let everyone know that New York state recently updated its quarantine guidelines for possible exposure. Saint Ann's will adopt those guidelines going forward. Close contacts of confirmed cases may now exit quarantine after 10 days if they do not experience symptoms. There continues to be no option to test out of quarantine due to possible exposure; the New York state guidelines go beyond CDC guidance in that respect and we continue to follow New York state policies.

## February Break

I want to share with you our current plans for the week following February break. As of this writing, we plan to once again test the full community and be open for in-person learning the week of February 15 (beginning on Tuesday). Our goal continues to be educating our students in person for as long as we can do so safely. Meeting that goal is only possible through our shared commitment to making the requisite choices—and, in some cases, sacrifices—that prioritize school first and foremost. In these stressful times I, like many of you, have longed to gather with family and friends, to seek respite and relaxation in travel. But I am asking the full community to put school first to the greatest extent possible as you consider your plans for February break. It is that spirit of commitment to one another and to the project of our school that has gotten us this far and will continue to allow us to teach and learn together in person.

Our expectation remains that anyone who travels will follow [New York state travel, quarantine and testing guidelines](#). Pool testing at school does not change that expectation.

We are working on the details of our testing and in-person learning plan following the break and will communicate about that in the coming weeks.

## Lunch

We are elated that our kitchen staff has returned in good health. Food service will resume next week; student lunch orders for Monday should be placed by midnight Sunday using the links on the Parent Portal. Any questions may be directed to [foodservicehelp@saintannsny.org](mailto:foodservicehelp@saintannsny.org).

## This Week's Numbers

We have added the five positive Covid cases that were identified over the course of the last three weeks to the [data dashboard](#): the two that were reported to us during the break, and the three that were identified through pool testing this week.

Love,