

August 10, 2021

Dear Congressional Community,

Our planning for the coming school year continues in earnest. Generally speaking, the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 have vastly improved in our region compared to last year at this time, thanks primarily to the widespread availability of COVID-19 vaccines. However, as you are well aware, a surge in COVID-19 cases driven by the contagious Delta variant has forced us to drastically rethink our approach to the pandemic.

As I've stated many times, I hold paramount the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff. Following extensive discussions throughout the summer with members of our COVID-19 Planning Groups, leadership team, and medical and public health experts, I am writing to share with you our new *COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for Employees, Students (12 years of age and older), and Visitors to Campus*. **Adults and students in the 12 and above age-group are at high risk of contracting and spreading the COVID-19 virus. As such, the following policy has been designed with the safety and health of our community as a top priority and is effective immediately.**

### **COVID-19 Vaccination**

The scientific data is unequivocal: Vaccines are the most effective way to minimize the spread and effects of COVID-19. Therefore, Congressional School continues to **strongly encourage vaccination for eligible individuals** as the best means for both ending the pandemic and providing our community with the best and safest educational and work environment. Vaccinations will enable our campus to return to one that is with few restrictions—one that feels much closer to normal than the past 18 months have.

In light of the fact that the majority of our student population is not vaccine eligible yet, the more who can be vaccinated, the more we will do to protect those children and individuals who are not eligible as of now. To date, we know that at least 88% of our full time faculty and staff members are already fully vaccinated. If you have any questions or concerns, we ask that you please contact your doctor at your very earliest convenience in order to seek guidance. Our Public Health Consultant, Dr. Tracy Krauss, is also available to speak with you about vaccinations and any concerns or questions you may have. You can reach her at [takrauss1998@gmail.com](mailto:takrauss1998@gmail.com).

As of this date, Congressional School is not requiring students or employees to be vaccinated while the vaccines are under Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA. However, we expect to require **age-eligible students and all employees to be vaccinated once the FDA grants full approval to a coronavirus vaccine**. In addition, it is very possible that we will change this decision in the future and require vaccination prior to the FDA's full approval if School operations are dramatically impacted by the next phases of the pandemic. Given the possibility

of full authorization occurring this fall, we ask employees to plan ahead and **will ask for parents to talk to their child's doctor about vaccination.**

### **Vaccinated Students(12 years of age and older)**

- If your student is fully vaccinated and you have not yet provided the School with the completed CDC vaccination card, please do so by **August 24, 2021**.
- If your student is eligible for the vaccine but not yet fully vaccinated and you plan for them to get the vaccine, please notify School Nurse [Lindsey Ticer](#) of your intent by **August 24, 2021** and provide the completed CDC vaccination card to the School by uploading it to the Magnus Health app on Colts Corner.
  - We chose this date to give those who have not yet been vaccinated sufficient time to do so.
  - The process of becoming fully vaccinated can take approximately 5-6 weeks from the date of your first shot if it is a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine; please plan accordingly.
  - Families with students who are actively in process of being vaccinated are required to follow the protocols outlined below for unvaccinated age-eligible students until proof of the first vaccination is provided to the School.
  - Families with students who become eligible for the vaccine during the school year must follow the vaccination policy outlined in this document.
- If your student is fully vaccinated and you have already provided proof of vaccination to the School, no action is required.
- **Daily Health Screenings**: All students, regardless of vaccination status, are required to submit the daily Magnus health screening questionnaire every day they are at school. This is a continuation of the protocol we followed in the 2020-2021 school year.

If you have any questions about the process of providing the vaccination card, feel free to contact one of our School Nurses, [Lindsey Ticer](#) or [Leah Boerman](#).

If the School does not receive information that your age-eligible student has been, or plans to get, vaccinated, the School will assume that they are not vaccinated for purposes of implementing its policies and protocol.

### **Unvaccinated Age-Eligible Students (12 years of age and older)**

We appreciate that some students may not be able to get the vaccine for medical or religious reasons, or may opt not to do so at this time. Students who have declined vaccination to-date will be required to follow several additional protocols. These include:

- **Weekly COVID-19 testing**: Congressional School will require the submission of a negative PCR test each Friday, starting **Friday, September 3, 2021** in order to be on campus the following week. The testing will not be provided by Congressional School; families must procure these tests and submit the results to School Nurse [Lindsey Ticer](#).

Students may come to school while they await their test results provided they have not had a COVID exposure and do not have symptoms.

- **Daily Health Screenings:** All students, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to submit the daily Magnus health screening questionnaire, continuing the protocol we followed from the 2020-2021 school year.

Should the School implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccine requirement, the School will review requests for medical or religious exemptions from the vaccine requirement on a case-by-case basis, consistent with applicable laws.

**Athletics participation (grades 5-8):** As of this date, the Capital Athletic Conference (CAC) has not met to determine vaccination policies for participation in fall athletics. Therefore, Congressional School does not know whether vaccinations will be required or what policies might apply to those who are unvaccinated. If a child is participating in a school-related sport and is unvaccinated, we are asking parents to take this into consideration and, as urged above, consider vaccination now.

### **Vaccinated Employees**

- If you are fully vaccinated and you have not yet provided the School with your completed CDC vaccination card, please do so by **August 24, 2021**.
- If you are not yet fully vaccinated but you plan to get the vaccine, please notify the School of your intent by **August 24, 2021** and provide your completed CDC vaccination card to the School at [tdavies@congressionalschool.org](mailto:tdavies@congressionalschool.org).
  - We chose this date to give those of you who have not yet been vaccinated sufficient time to do so.
  - The process of becoming fully vaccinated can take approximately 5-6 weeks from the date of your first shot if it is a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine; please plan accordingly.
- If you are fully vaccinated and you have already provided your vaccination card to the School, no action is required.
- Employees who are actively pursuing vaccination are required to adhere to the following protocols outlined for unvaccinated employees until proof of the first vaccination is provided to the School.

If you have any questions about the process of providing the vaccination card, feel free to contact Director of Human Resources and Strategic Initiatives, [Tinelle Davies](#).

If the School does not receive information that you have been, or plan to get, vaccinated, the School will assume that you are not vaccinated for purposes of implementing its policies and protocol.

## Unvaccinated Employees

We appreciate that some employees may not be able to get the vaccine for medical or religious reasons, or may opt not to do so at this time. Employees who have declined vaccination to-date will be required to follow several additional protocols These include:

- **Weekly COVID-19 testing**: Congressional School will require the submission of a negative PCR test each Friday, starting **Friday, September 3, 2021** in order to be on campus the following week. Employees may come to work while they await their test results provided they have not had a COVID exposure and do not have symptoms. The testing will not be provided by Congressional School; Employees must procure these tests and submit the results to either [Lindsey Ticer](#) or [Leah Boerman](#).
- **Daily Health Screenings**: Unvaccinated employees will be required to submit results from a daily health screening form that will be provided by the School. More information is forthcoming in mid-August. Vaccinated individuals will not have this requirement.

Should the School implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccine requirement, the School will review requests for medical or religious exemptions from the vaccine requirement on a case-by-case basis, consistent with applicable laws.

## Additional information

**Mask use:** In accordance with the CDC's updated school guidance and consistent with recommendations issued by the Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Education, mask use will be required at Congressional School for all students, teachers, staff, and visitors while on campus. Masks also must be worn on any school bus, and the School requests that carpool participants from separate households wear masks unless the entire group is fully vaccinated. Details regarding any possible outdoor mask requirements will be determined and communicated by the Division Heads closer to the start of school. The School may adjust masking requirements based on transmission rates and community vaccination status.

**Parents and other campus visitors:** While the Delta variant is surging and COVID-19 Infections continue to increase, **Congressional School will not allow parents, admissions candidates, and other visitors in our buildings as of this date.** When conditions improve we will consider modifying our visitor policy. We apologize for the inconvenience this may cause, as we were looking forward to our parents and other visitors joining us in our building in the fall.

**Other campus safety measures:** The School has kept in place its HEPA air purifiers purchased last year and will continue to prioritize ventilation and fresh air. The School will also continue to thoroughly clean the facilities. The School will continue to encourage strong hygiene practices, including frequent hand washing or sanitation. Similar to last year, students will be allowed to refill water bottles in our drinking fountains throughout the day. Finally, the School will

continue to provide distancing, as possible, within classrooms, depending on the space available, in keeping with recent CDC and local health agency recommendations.

Congressional School has been challenged by the pandemic and I am proud that we have met the challenge as a caring, supportive community that values each member. It is in that spirit that I ask our families and faculty and staff to continue working with us to keep our community safe and healthy. Thank you for your endurance and ongoing efforts during these extraordinary times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Edwin P. Gordon, PhD  
Head of School