



## A Message from Head of School Ben Williams

Dear Cate Families,

It seems every passing week brings with it some new set of unusual experiences. After a long weekend that found us enjoying what felt like a traditional Halloween—complete with a very spooky “Haunted Hill” courtesy of our seniors—a restful day off on Monday and a luxuriously late start on Tuesday, we and the rest of the country ran headlong into a presidential election like no other.

I met with several groups of students over the last three days just to talk through all that is happening and how to process it. In every case, I found that young people who are working hard to inform themselves are engaging thoughtfully with friends and faculty members and are taking great care of one another. Frankie Nieman '20 and Lily Zanze '20, our prefects who led assembly on Wednesday, began our gathering with a lovely reminder of who we are collectively and how we treat each other in every moment, but particularly in times that are charged with emotion and strong feeling. Wise guidance, indeed.

### **Fall Break Campus Visitation**

As we await further word on national events, we are moving forward on a host of other fronts, several of which involve collaboration with our families. The first includes Fall Break, when we expect some families of boarding students will come to campus to spend time with their children. We look forward to hosting you on the Mesa and want to remind you of the protocols we have in place to support community health.

Before you come, please:

- Get tested for the coronavirus.
- See that any family members accompanying you do the same.
- Fill out the form regarding your current health 24 hours prior to your visit.
- Change plans if you are feeling ill or not quite right on the day of your intended visit.

### **Day Student Expectations During Fall Break**

As of today, we have just completed another full round of testing for the student body and the faculty,

which yielded all negative results. We want to keep it that way. Thank you, too, to all of our families of day students who joined [our call on Monday](#). Consistent with the protocols and policies we have established for boarding students and families, day families have agreed to refrain from travel or gatherings beyond immediate family. Some day students may well come to the Mesa, where we have a host of activities and meals planned for the Fall Break.

If a family does elect for whatever reason to spend the holiday in a manner that is inconsistent with the aforementioned understanding—meaning a day student travels by plane or train, is exposed to others outside the family group for 15 minutes or more (CDC guidelines), or risks exposure to COVID-19 by other associations or behaviors—then that student will have to remain at home in quarantine during the week following break and will be tested for the virus by appointment at Cate on Friday, December 4 (also consistent with CDC guidelines). Such quarantined students can return to campus and classes during the following week, the last before Winter Break, as long as they test negative on December 4. Students remaining at home in quarantine during this period will not have access to their classes in real-time but will be able to stay abreast of assignments through PowerSchool (our online learning management system) and/or asynchronous meetings with instructors.

We are quite excited at the prospect of Fall Break together and we're immensely appreciative of the support and care we have received from all of our families as we try to build a safe and fulfilling experience for our kids. Said one of our seniors to me today, "I know this sounds strange ... but everything feels kind of normal around here now." I can't imagine higher praise.

### **Winter Break**

Just as we prepare for Fall Break, though, we have our eye on the much longer Winter Break ahead. I know you have recently [received a note from us asking about travel plans and the like](#). Please fill out the attached form as soon as possible. Not only does it help with our planning—which is as important as it is complicated these days—but it will help us to support those students who will be staying with us over the Winter Break and plan for their care here on the Mesa.

Though there remains much that is uncertain in the world, there are some welcome constants even now. I was mindful of that very fact when I walked past the patio in front of the Chapel on Thursday night, and Last Call, our a cappella group, was rehearsing in the moonlight. The sound of their voices in the stillness of the warm evening was deeply reassuring. Life goes on and song with it.

*Servons,*

Ben



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