

Corona-Update: February 26th

The first confirmed Covid-19 infection in Land Baden Württemberg (LBW) has been reported. LBW is the region of Germany in which the College is located. The infected person is in Göppingen, some 210km by road from Freiburg, and had visited the area of Milan, in Italy. While there is a small number of infected people in Germany, there have been no reported deaths due to the virus.

UWC Robert Bosch College does not plan to close at this time, unless instructed to do so by the Authorities. If so instructed, the College will confirm whether this applies also to the boarding section of the school.

The College is in contact with Landesgesundheitsamt Stuttgart and the Gesundheitsamt Freiburg (the health Authorities for LBW and for Freiburg), and with the LBW Authorities for boarding schools. As previously reported, the College has been in contact with the infectious diseases section at the University Hospital in Freiburg (UniKlinik Freiburg) and follows the protocols that have been suggested. The College also checks the Robert Koch Institute website daily for updates on high risk areas. We will advise students and staff accordingly, in relation to their travels and CASs. If the spread of the virus reaches Freiburg, the College may require students to remain on campus.

The College is in communication with our Caterers, Dreisamwerke, and while circumstances might in time force changes in the menu, we are fully confident that food will continue to be available. Even if circumstances dictate that the catering staff may not all be able to be present, each student house also is equipped with a kitchen. I have written separately to the (very few) parents whose children are known to have compromised immune systems, and accordingly would be at higher risk should they be infected by Covid-19.

During Thursday's Tutor Period, students will be reminded of general good hygiene, and reminded to seek attention as soon as they might feel ill. In general terms, throughout the year roughly 20 to 30 students report to the nurse every day for a wide range of ailments. Feeling "under the weather", having a cold or influenza is part of "normal" life, and we need to remember that at this stage it is most unlikely that any member of the school community has contracted Covid-19.

When you allowed your child to leave home and come to UWC Robert Bosch College, you demonstrated that you were prepared to accept the risk of your child being away from home. At the time your child – our student – made this decision, Covid-19 was not a factor. In my non-medical view, the presence of Covid-19 in LBW increases the risks slightly, but for many students not more than would be the case if they were at home. It could be phrased that you considered that the benefit of a UWC education and all the

opportunities that come with this outweighed, in your thinking, the risk of having your child further away - for most of you in a foreign country, for many of you in a completely foreign culture. You accepted that your child indeed was transitioning to adulthood and with this would come a completely new set of risks.

As Rektor I want to honour your courage, and the courage of your children - our students – in accepting the risks explicitly and implicitly tied up with leaving home and engaging in a form of experiential education. I wish to honour your and the students' courage: by continuing to offer a UWC education while the Authorities allow the College to do so. In these new circumstances, the responsibility is yours for deciding whether you wish your child to remain at UWC Robert Bosch College with the precautions described above, or whether they should return home. Should you take the view that you wish your child to return home now, I will respect your decision. This decision will not in itself have an adverse effect on their good standing at the College. However, if your child returns home, inevitably they will not be in a position to receive the same level of academic and pastoral support as students who remain at the College, but plans will be made to keep them informed of what is being taught in class. I need to record that the College is not in a position to fund students' travel for voluntarily returning home.

If a situation arises where UWC Robert Bosch College is required to close both the school and the boarding section, the College will work closely with you, staff, the families of German students, Host Families and the German National Committee to ensure that every student who cannot return home is accommodated. The teachers also will make plans for learning to continue. Under these circumstances, the College will fund the travel costs for all students who receive travel assistance as part of their scholarship provision, and if needs be those where the family / national committee is genuinely unable to bear the costs. But let us hope – and plan as sensibly as we can – that we can remain open and with generally-healthy students and staff.

The College will send updates while Covid-19 continues to cause concern.

Laurence Nodder, Rektor