

Corona-Update: March 2nd

When Laurence last wrote to you all on February 26th it was to inform you that a case of Covid-19 infection had been confirmed in Land Baden-Württemberg (LBW), the measures the College is currently undertaking to ensure the continued education of our students and that further updates would be provided as the situation unfolds. As Laurence is currently attending the Heads' Meeting in our sister College UWC East Africa, in Tanzania, it has fallen to me to provide the next update.

Two staff members who were in high risk areas in Italy have been asked not to come to campus and to self-isolate for the standard 14-day quarantine period (reassuringly, neither of them have exhibited any symptoms so far). On Thursday and Friday of last week, a handful of cases were confirmed in Freiburg. All are currently being treated in Freiburg's University Hospital (Uniklinik Freiburg) Hospital. For some context, four of the five people are employees of the same local firm, situated on the other side of the city, who had recently been at a meeting in Munich which was also host to a person from Italy, later also found to have tested positive. One further person diagnosed was an acquaintance of one of these employees.

Thus, all cases have a clear source and since then, there have been no further cases in Freiburg, though the number in Germany has increased, currently at 129. When the news reached us of those 5 cases, we took the decision, as a purely precautionary measure, to not allow student to leave campus until we had received clear guidelines from the local authorities. Those authorities have since made it very clear that we remain open and have not suggested that it is sensible to stop students from leaving campus. Indeed, so far, no schools or kindergartens have been asked to close in the region or the state. Thus, from Friday lunchtime it has been very much business as usual, with students allowed to leave campus once again. That said, we are not being complacent, and the community has been instructed via tutorial meetings and communications from staff, to consider the usual

precautionary measures such as hand hygiene, cough etiquette, keeping a distance from other people (1-2m) and avoiding big crowds, cinemas and bars. The College is in regular contact with Landesgesundheitsamt Stuttgart and the Gesundheitsamt Freiburg (the Health Authorities for LBW and for Freiburg), and with the LBW Authorities for boarding schools. We are also in contact with the infectious diseases section at UniKlinik Freiburg and follow the protocols that have been suggested. The College also checks the Robert Koch Institute website daily for updates on high risk areas. We shall continue to monitor the situation and advise students and staff accordingly. These are uncertain times, so calm, stability and a sense of routine go a long way to alleviate concerns and worries. Thus, as mentioned before, it is still very much business as usual;

mock exams start today for our second years whilst the first years will be engaging in the Group 4 Project Week from Wednesday.

As always, Laurence or I will reach out to you all again should there be any changes or updates.

Helen White, Deputy Rektor