

## Corona-Update: April 16<sup>th</sup>

Yesterday German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that schools would re-open, for some year groups, starting on the 4<sup>th</sup> May. Subsequently newspapers have published that this includes the Abitur year and the year leading to it (RBC's DP1). I am confident in the prudence of the Authorities in these areas. This is not a populist decision, but one that carefully balances risks considering current, best information. RBC is waiting for more detailed announcements from the Education and the Boarding Establishment Authorities. We anticipate we will receive broad guidance on when and how to welcome back to campus the dozen or so 1<sup>st</sup> year students who have returned home or are staying with a host family, and the staff who live off-campus. We suggest that these students start to think of a return, but I strongly recommend that no flight or train bookings are made until RBC can give clarity in these matters, which we will do as quickly as we can. Those students who cannot or choose not to return will continue to receive some form of online support.

I think all campus residents enjoyed the Spring/Easter break. Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> was celebrated as Spring Day – with traditional work parties in and around the Medieval Garden, in the river at the Stromhaus, and in different areas of the beautiful college campus. Instead of the traditional Holi celebration (with lots of dye and, at RBC, water, creating a colourful but now inappropriate outdoor spectacle), students and staff prepared a range of cultural workshops and a Covid-19-appropriate RBC Olympics testing dexterity and physical strength. Each student was in a working party and also encouraged to sign up for a cultural workshop and the RBC Olympics, creating a full day from 9am to 6:30pm.

Easter was marked in different ways: from students and staff being invited to watch a videoed performance of Bach's St Matthew's Passion to Christian faith groups meeting in the Room of Silence, to an all-night bonfire vigil and a special Easter breakfast in the Monastery Garden.

On Monday evening we enjoyed a treat: the 36-Hour Challenge Theatre Cast presentation of their own take of the Broadway musical **"Dear Evan Hansen"**.

Now we are back in online classes for 1<sup>st</sup> year students, with the remaining 2<sup>nd</sup> year students (who cannot travel back home, or who would return to adverse circumstances) helping in a wide range of ways including tutoring, working in the garden, reception and running a morning Breakfast Show.

We are planning with Muslim students the start of Ramadan on the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

I want to commend our students and you, our parents and guardians, that we are well placed to resume classroom teaching from the day that this is allowed. This would not have been possible without your confidence: the large majority of 1<sup>st</sup> year students remain in community on campus.

The Covid-19 pandemic has and is taking a dreadful toll on most of our countries and societies. Most RBC families have been directly affected by the pandemic: through illness, losing employment, new and heavy responsibilities, "even" through difficult lockdowns. I am sure that deep challenges remain. We will continue to face these in solidarity and with good sense, as best as we can.

Laurence Nodder, Rektor