

Corona-Update: May 1st

Information for parents and guardians of incoming students

Firstly, congratulations on your child – UWC Robert Bosch College’s prospective student – being selected to attend this UWC starting on the 22nd August 2020. They showed initiative and courage in applying. Throughout the world, selection into UWC is highly selective. It is a great honour simply to have been selected!

Already I hold you in high esteem for being willing to contemplate your child leaving home, moving to a different part of the world, for many if not most into a different language and cultural environment, and to a part of the world where there isn’t a ready network of relatives and family friends. And this is without all the challenges around the novel coronavirus and Covid-19 infections.

Because of entry restrictions and travel bans, there remains some uncertainty around aspects of the start of the new academic year for the incoming class. Currently Germany is closed to travelers. We hope and expect aspects of these entry restrictions will be lifted in the coming months, but this is not certain. We are aware that German Embassies in most countries are not yet granting appointments for visa applications for those incoming students who would need a visa to come to Germany; we look forward to visa appointments (and visas!) being granted in the coming months. At the beginning of May it remains impossible to travel from some parts of the world to Germany; we hope that many transport connections will be restored in the coming months.

What we can be reasonably certain about is:

- UWC Robert Bosch College (RBC) will start the academic year as advertised on the 22nd August.
- It is most likely that the Authorities will require all returning and incoming students and staff to undertake a quarantine. The current situation for students who return to RBC from beyond Germany is that a 14-day quarantine is required by law. Currently the Authorities allow this to happen in Student Houses on campus. While not required by law, at this stage the Freiburg Health Authority strongly recommends that students returning from Germany also undergo quarantine. Currently, returning students from within Germany serve a 7-day quarantine in a Student House, followed by a medical test administered by the College doctor to confirm their Covid-19 status.

As already mentioned, we expect but cannot be certain that incoming 1st year students will be allowed to enter Germany to start their schooling:

- The Bundespolizei (German border police) informed RBC this week that regulations regarding the first entry of people to Germany is changing on a regular basis. Their website suggests that a reason for a first entry to Germany could be for the purposes of education, school and study. But this week when we checked, the Bundespolizei said it was too early to know for sure what the situation will be in August 2020.

It is our strong hope and desire that your child will join us in August 2020. But this firstly is your and their decision especially under current circumstances. Even if you agree and they choose to come, it cannot be certain that their visa (if needed) will be granted in time or that transport links are (re)established from your home to Freiburg. While RBC is willing and able to support online education for students unable to join us in late August – a form of blended education together with students in class – in the end RBC does not think this is a viable longer-term solution for UWC education, and not beyond the end of October 2020.

If a student has not been able to secure an appointment for a visa by 15th June 2020 with the appointment being before July 31, experience shows that it is highly improbable even in non-Covid times for students to arrive sufficiently near the beginning of the academic year. If this is the case for your child, or if the restoration of travel links to Germany is unlikely, RBC may need to discuss alternative arrangements for your child with you, your child and your country UWC National Committee. First, we would explore the possibility of a transfer to a different, possibly regional UWC. If this is not possible, RBC would explore with you whether your child's (younger) age and their class at school make it feasible to defer their enrolment at RBC to August 2021. If no alternative solutions can be found, with deep regret RBC would need to withdraw its offer to your child: so as not to hold out false hope, and to allow for other regional students who cannot travel to their UWCs to transfer here.

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