

11th August 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians of 1st year students,

UWC Robert Bosch College welcomes students on campus on Saturday 22nd August.

This simple statement possibly brings very different emotions: for some, excitement that their child's – our student's – UWC college journey is beginning, mixed with the natural anxieties related to a child leaving home especially in these uncertain, Covid-19 times. For many others, this simple statement might bring pain and a sense of personal disappointment. Currently 36 of RBC's designated 1st year students do not have permission to enter Germany. Most of these 36 students have agreed to defer their entry to RBC to August 2021 if permission for them to enter Germany is not granted, but they remain in hope for a start this year. Facing entry challenges into Germany, another 13 students have deferred in a formal sense so that they can have greater certainty in planning. One student has withdrawn from UWC. Currently another 4 students have been able to transfer to different UWCs – where they can gain permission to enter the country. (RBC also has admitted 8 students who were originally admitted by other UWCs.) Admissions Director Hubertus Zander has been in contact with all students facing entry challenges to Germany.

I want to thank Parents and Guardians, Board Members, staff and incoming students for your efforts in approaching (where you had connections) – and in some instances petitioning – the Authorities for a favourable ruling for our incoming students. We continue to hope that these approaches and petitions result in permission to come to Freiburg for all 36 students who remain waiting in hope.

Before outlining the arrangements around arrivals, I want to remind you, our “first-year” Parents, Guardians and students, that the risks inherent in experiential international education are heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic. So far it appears as if young people in their late teens are not generally at very high risk of serious illness or death if indeed they become infected with the coronavirus (the teachers, staff and Rektor are at significantly higher general risk), but the risks for students are not completely insignificant. Teenagers in general are not particularly inclined towards social distancing. Also, RBC is not of the nature of an institution where it can tightly control the behaviour of students and their every interaction. While we educate and trust all in our community to behave responsibly, in ways that lessen the risks of transmitting or catching this or other contagious diseases, RBC does not (and cannot) guarantee that no student will become ill. While the health facilities in Freiburg generally can be described as very strong, this does not *guarantee* that a student or member of staff who does fall ill will indeed recover. (In every case so far in RBC's history, health matters have ended positively!)

If you, the individual Parents, Guardians and students are willing to accept the heightened risks of coming to RBC – a school and a boarding school - in these times, we as the College staff will continue to honour your courage by offering a UWC education including a residential experience so long as we continue to have the permission of the Authorities to do so. Last Semester we learnt that even when classroom teaching was not permitted, the Authorities continued to allow RBC to operate as a boarding establishment and with lessons being offered online. I am confident that if the Authorities again close schools this coming

academic year, the Authorities again will allow RBC to remain open as a boarding establishment. If we are not allowed to do so, we will either find host families for the students or, where it still is possible, help students to return home (with RBC financial support if the family / NC cannot afford this.)

While RBC has had months of experience of maintaining academic and broader UWC momentum during the Covid-19 pandemic, and in May some students who had gone home returned to RBC when classroom lessons were allowed to resume, this is our first attempt to re-convene as a community in Covid-19 times. It is worth outlining our approach to this.

Arrival on the 22nd August

- Some students have indicated that they will arrive at Frankfurt International Airport (and one at Basel Airport) on the 22nd August, where they will be met by RBC staff and brought back to campus by bus or in a college van. Regulations regarding who can and should be tested for Covid-19 at the Airport keep on being developed. We will confirm closer to the 22nd August which incoming students should be tested at the Airport.
- The campus opens at 10am. Students are requested not to arrive on campus before 10am.
- Some students will be arriving in Freiburg by train or by bus. All people taking public transport (and the buses hired by RBC) will be required to wear masks. This is a legal requirement.
- Some students will be brought to campus by parents, guardians or friends. *Please accept and understand that this year our welcome of accompanying adults will need to be a socially-distanced one, and accompanying adults will not be allowed up to the student houses or shown around the campus. Everyone will need to wear a mask.*

Initial assignment to student houses

There will be a welcome desk at the entrance to the student (and staff) village.

- If a student is well and has arrived from a country / region that is not considered high risk (in Covid-19 terms) by the Authorities, the student will be assigned as one of four people to a four-person room.
- If a student has arrived from a country / region that is considered high risk, they will be assigned as one of two people in a four-person room.

Testing for Covid-19 on arrival to Germany and UWC Robert Bosch College

- As mentioned above, students arriving at Frankfurt International Airport may be tested for Covid-19 infection at the Airport, and the results forwarded through them to RBC. Students who have received a PCR test at Frankfurt International Airport will not have a further PCR test on arrival at RBC.
- Within hours of their arrival at RBC, all students who were not tested at the Airport will undergo a PCR test, on campus, administered under the supervision of a medical doctor. (Staff will have been tested in the days before the reopening.)

- All students and staff also will undergo an antibody test under the same supervision.
- There is no charge to families for these tests (where applicable, students' medical insurance will cover costs for the PCR tests and a donor kindly is covering the balance of the costs.)

The wearing of masks and isolation / "pod" arrangements, quarantine arrangements

- Students (and staff) will be required to wear masks throughout the Arrival and Orientation except when eating, washing, sleeping, or leading a formal Orientation activity - where face shields may be worn to ease understanding by the listeners.
- Students will be kept in relative isolation (two to a large room) or in a "pod" arrangement (for each student house for students from those countries and areas not considered at high risk) until a student's Covid-19 (PCR) test results become available. In a "pod" arrangement, students are kept together as a House unit, not permitted to engage directly (even when wearing masks) with students in other houses. When a student's result is negative, the student may be moved to another house with others who are confirmed Covid-negative and given more opportunities for movement and interaction on campus.
- At the time of writing, there is no requirement for quarantine of any person once they receive a negative Covid-19 test.
- In the (unlikely) event that a student is diagnosed as having contracted Covid-19, that student will be moved to an isolation house (or to hospital if their symptoms become more serious).
- RBC has a good supply of disposable masks, as well as re-usable masks for those sufficiently responsible to wash and iron their mask on a daily basis. There is no cost to students and staff for these masks.

Orientation

The Orientation programme will begin once the bulk of the test results have been received.

For the whole of the Orientation, as many activities as possible will be held outdoors. Students and staff will be required to wear masks (or a face shield if leading a group – to aid understanding by listeners). It will not be the same as previous Orientations; rather it will be a programme constructed also keeping in mind the need to keep appropriate social distance and to lessen the risks of widespread Covid-19 transmission in case of a false-negative finding in any of the PCR tests.

For the Covid-19 safety of the community around RBC and for general reassurance, students will not be allowed to leave campus during Orientation.

Assignment to Student Houses for the academic year

Only once the great majority of test results have been released will students be assigned to their student house for 2020/2021. No student will be sent to their regular student house until they have received a negative PCR test result.

An Isolation House

With several incoming 1st year students sadly unlikely to be able to join RBC because of visa/entry restrictions, it is likely that a complete student house can be kept aside as the isolation house, as was the case from early April 2020 until the end of last Semester. Students who arrive after the 22nd / 23rd August may be assigned to the isolation house until they can be tested, and the results released (and negative). There are other options for keeping sick students in isolation if most students are able to join RBC by October.

Start of classes

- The current plan is for classroom lessons to start on Tuesday 1st September.
- Currently there are no regulatory requirements for social-distancing requirements in classrooms, nor for students to wear masks while in class.
- However, our intention is that students will wear masks while in class and at least until RBC can be confident that the risk of Covid-19 infection in the school community is negligible.
- Thereafter, decisions will be made considering the infection rates in and around Freiburg, the views of the education and health authorities (including the Gesundheitsamt in Freiburg) and the degree to which we decide, in light of prevailing circumstances, to keep strictly to ourselves and on campus. *Please understand that this is not a “static” pandemic; as the situation changes RBC also will adapt with responsibility and creativity.*
- Director of Studies Dr. Christian Bock will write a separate academic note to parents, guardians and students including regarding RBC’s basic online provision.

Conclusion

Fortunately, the Covid-19 situation in Freiburg and Germany is much, much less alarming than it was from mid-March through April. Yet there is no room for complacency: there is again an increasing infection rate in Germany – though off a relatively low base. I hope that you have confidence that RBC will take cautious yet appropriate measures – including when the health situation might warrant letting students more widely off-campus.

This is unlikely to be a business-as-usual UWC year. But with good understanding and support from the students, it will be a remarkable and profound opportunity to grow as a community of people drawn from so many different parts of the world and from so many different backgrounds. I am confident that opportunities will arise, day by day, to give life to the UWC values. The UWC values that resonate most in my thinking about this coming academic year are: “personal responsibility and integrity”, and “mutual responsibility and

respect". These values need to inform our thinking, also in Covid-19 times, around sustainability.

I look forward again to being a partner, with you, in the education of these remarkable, courageous young people: your children, our incoming students.