

11<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians of 1<sup>st</sup> year students,

### Winter Break

UWC Robert Bosch College will remain open in a residential sense for the whole of the Winter Break, for those who chose to remain here. While there is a genuine welcome for your children – our students – to stay here over Winter, and RBC is in the process of recruiting four RBC graduates to help in facilitating a holiday programme, of course we all wish that circumstances were different.

Europe is facing a major “2<sup>nd</sup> wave” of covid-19 infections, leading to much stricter measures by most European governments. While Germany has introduced what could be described as a “lockdown light” – at this stage leaving schools open – the arrangements for people entering Germany from those countries and regions (including from other countries in the EU) that are considered at high risk have been made much stricter since the 8<sup>th</sup> November. People are required to travel to their destination in Germany and enter quarantine for a minimum of 10 days. A traveler may shorten their quarantine by undergoing a PCR test *after* 5 days in quarantine, and then exit quarantine on receipt of a negative test result (which still may take several days).

I have already written that RBC cannot, under current circumstances, offer quarantine facilities. The reason is simple. Almost all our student rooms, most of which are designed to accommodate four students, are full. When we started the new academic year, the Authorities agreed to a quarantine arrangement of two students to a four-person room when the students were traveling from a “high-risk” area. Because of what turned out to be a staggered start, and because the majority of students were from places that at that stage were not “high-risk”, and because the formal quarantine was simply until a negative test result was received – normally with a waiting period of 24 hours – RBC was able to manage this on campus. (Also it was summer, and in an emergency we would have asked some of the students who had spent their summer at the College, together with other students from Germany, to camp for a few days in the college grounds. This is not a viable strategy for winter.)

Furthermore, I need to remind Parents that RBC does not have the depth of staffing to provide in-person teaching on campus and to provide online classes to those who may not be able to find adequate quarantine arrangements and therefore would not be able to return in person to RBC. Our priority must be to teach the on-campus students.

One option that RBC has considered, and at this stage has rejected, is to ask our German students and their families to welcome students from other countries over Winter break. Under current regulations we think this might challenge understandings of the number of Households gathered together, especially if the family also wished to host other friends and relatives, even if only for a meal.

RBC cannot have any certainty about the severity at the time of the Winter Break of National, Regional and Local regulations regarding travel and quarantine, or around the regulations regarding the number of Households that can gather. Regulations might get even more strict, alternatively if infection rates drop dramatically, they might be made less onerous. The only certainties that we can provide are, in summary:

- Positively: RBC will remain open to any student who chooses to stay here for the Winter Break;
- Negatively: RBC is unable to provide quarantine facilities for returning students; and

- Negatively: RBC is unable to offer online classes in any formal sense to those students who chose to travel and subsequently cannot return to RBC.

For those especially from beyond Germany who for all sorts of reasons were hoping that their children could come home this Winter Break and now need to accept that this is highly unlikely, my heart goes out to you. My heart also goes out to those students who had hoped to go home, or go to a home, this Winter. This is doubly so for those 2<sup>nd</sup> year students who have not been able to go home since their arrival at RBC in August 2019 and who spent the Summer break on Campus.

#### Special Focus Day on Sustainability

Tomorrow RBC suspends its usual timetable for a day that focuses on Sustainability. Quoting from the organizers:

The day has the motto "**Many ways to bring about change**". After a common short introduction, there will be a separate programme for Y1 and Y2 students.

**Y1 students** will spend most of the day using a structured problem-solving approach to solve some real-world sustainability challenges in our school.

**Y2 students** will meanwhile use the opportunity to engage with some "Big Issues" in more detail than our busy daily routine normally allows for.

After these separate blocks, from 14:30 on, everyone takes part in the "**Sustainability Heroes Speed Dating**", with small groups of students meeting inspiring change-makers from all around the world. (Covid-19 precautions and restrictions having impacted the RBC schedule for guest speakers in several areas; we have "discovered" the advantage of being able to engage online with inspiring guests located around the world.)

#### Host Family Weekend

RBC has had to cancel aspects of the Host Family Weekend, which was scheduled for this coming weekend. If an individual Family and their student are comfortable in meeting given current infection rates and regulations, we support this during the day. Guidance has been given for such meetings. But students will sleep at RBC, not with their Host Families. I wish to thank and commend our Host Families for their ongoing support of the students and of RBC.

With best wishes,



Laurence Nodder  
Rektor

cc. National Committees