

23rd December 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians, copied to National Committees,

“2020 has been a challenging year for everyone and the Fall term at UWC RBC was no exception. Many of the events that usually punctuate student life (like Open Day, Project Week or the Host Family Weekend) could not take place or had to take another shape. Possibilities to get out into the city and to engage with the local community were limited and interacting with each other while wearing face masks also had to become part of the new routine. But at the same time, we were lucky to have a full school and to enjoy in-person lessons all term. Like every year, students built a community and made new friends. They were able to make use of the many opportunities offered to them on campus, to start new initiatives and to enjoy the UWC experience despite all the challenges”. This was written by French teacher Pascale Chretien, herself a UWC graduate, in a Personal Tutor report, a good summary of the year and of the Term.

I have enjoyed reading and proofing all our students – your children’s – Personal Tutor reports, and when I do so I have both their photographs and their grades on-screen. Director of Studies Christian Bock reads and proofs all academic comments, and Director of Student Life Helen White does the same for the Extra Academics and House Tutor reports.

It is a privilege to read these reports in the aggregate, to read of the courage, excitement and expanding horizons as well as struggles faced and being overcome. It is a privilege to sense again so strongly and in this level of detail that RBC students are not participating in a diminished UWC education. Of course, some things are different – especially that we have far fewer off-campus possibilities than in previous years – but there are compensations. One of these is the closeness that has developed within the 2nd year students and now is developing within the whole school community.

Previously I have explained that RBC does not publish students’ grades in their 1st year December reports, and given the reasons for this. Additionally, it strikes me again that over thirty 1st year students arrived after school began, all the way through to the 11th October. These students missed the Orientation, missed the launching lessons in their IB subjects, many missed weeks and some a couple of months of classes. Many 1st year students are still to grow comfortable learning through the medium of English. Of course, current grades cannot be an accurate reflection of their effort and potential! To the parents and guardians of 2nd year students, please remember that your child’s grades do not yet include the potential extra points for their Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge. And that the IB world average aggregate for those who obtain a Diploma generally is between 29 and 30 points.

Please read the reports and use these as a prompt for conversations with your children.

Currently, 97 students are on campus for the Winter Break. They are missing home, and no doubt you are missing them. We wish it were different. We have tried to strike an easy balance between giving students space simply to rest and chill this break, the freedom to cook (or to learn to cook) to their own taste re-creating memories of home, or to be adventurous in cooking and eating with others (at a UWC almost inevitably including from

different food traditions). At the informal assembly on Monday, I encouraged students to volunteer student-led mostly evening events, to help give shape to the week ahead.

This week's informal programme is:

Tuesday: Karaoke night in the Auditorium
Wednesday: Hide and go Seek evening
Thursday: A communal Christmas Eve dinner provided by the Caterers, followed by Glühwein and Kinderpunsch and small gifts from RBC
Friday: A gathering of the Christians on Campus for a Christmas service
Saturday: Board game evening
Sunday: Pizza evening at the Pizza Oven, with a bonfire

For students who have travelled home or to a home (thank you to parents and guardians for having hosted students!), students are welcome to return back to RBC before and are expected to return back by the evening of the 10th January. If students are returning from within Germany, they are required to return with a negative PCR test result less than 48 hours old. If returning from outside Germany, regulations require a quarantine (and RBC cannot host this on campus) and that the quarantine can be ended after a negative test taken after the 5th day of quarantine. RBC requires this to be a PCR test.

Thank you to all who have donated funds to help cover the costs of hosting students over the Winter Break and making this more than simply a place to sleep and eat.

Recent Covid developments in the United Kingdom, and reactions from most EU countries including Germany, make me think that we are not yet "out of the woods" regarding the Coronavirus pandemic. It will take months for most people in Germany to receive a Covid vaccination, and until then most likely we will need to continue living lives of Covid caution and with degrees of restriction. We will need to be resilient, able to respond prudently but not with paranoia to sudden, negative developments.

We finish the year grateful to medical staff around the world who have faced extraordinary pressures and anguish because of so many ill and dying Covid patients, and grateful to the scientists whose extraordinary knowledge and research has led to such a rapid development of Covid vaccines.

We also finish the year grateful that we managed to bring together 196 students for this term, that our schooling was uninterrupted except for the last 2 ½ days of the term, and that we now have an opportunity of a little rest and recuperation, to be ready for next year.

Thank you, parents and guardians, for your support which has been felt every step of the way.

With Season's Greetings,



Laurence Nodder
Rektor

cc. National Committees