

21<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians, copied to UWC National Committees,

I am pleased to report that the students who had gone (mostly) home for the Spring/Easter break have returned safely to RBC. While there were a few delays due to Covid-19 testing, everyone returned with a recent, negative PCR test. They were tested again as they entered Campus, and twice again after that (after a further two days and then a further three days).

The Spring / Easter break was needed! My sense is that most managed to re-gather the energy needed for the remainder of the Semester: the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students facing their Final Diploma examinations and a (now internal) Leavers' Ceremony on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May; the 1<sup>st</sup> year students writing their internal year-end examinations followed by a return to classes, and then a closing programme, with 1<sup>st</sup> year students departing on the 12<sup>th</sup> June.

This is the final teaching week for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. On Friday evening we will continue what has developed as a RBC tradition: a special dinner for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students and staff, with students placing items in a time capsule to be opened at the 5 Year Reunion. Because of Covid this now needs to take place on-campus and under more careful arrangements. The ritual of people placing things in a time capsule, often also with a spoken reflection of their time at RBC and the meaning, in their RBC context, of the item they are placing in the time capsule, now will take place in the Auditorium. The Covid-arrangements for staff will be as for usual Assemblies. This year 2<sup>nd</sup> year students and staff will not sit together for the dinner, and indeed most members of staff will eat under the current regulations for school staff: many of us in our offices. This minimizes unmasked contact between students and staff. At least we have been able to preserve the rituals of reflection and the time capsule, shared together.

Starting this week, the Authorities require that students who attend in-person classes need to undertake rapid tests twice a week, as do any members of staff working on campus who have not yet been vaccinated. This testing requirement, designed primarily for day schools where every day every student comes from and returns to a wider beyond-school social context, is not particularly designed for a boarding school whose students largely are in a "bubble".

Please understand that up to now RBC has indeed tested students whose symptoms *might* be associated with Covid-19 infection. RBC also has tested students who have been hospitalized (not yet for Covid-related reasons - and after returning from hospital students are asked also to spend a few days in a quarantine room on campus), or who have traveled beyond Freiburg, or who have spent a night or nights off-campus out of the RBC "bubble". So far, to the best of our knowledge, RBC has not yet had a person on campus with Covid-19 infection.

RBC will continue to test people on a symptomatic basis in addition to this now-compulsory testing. I need to mention, in advance, especially with rapid tests in this type of context there is a chance of "false positives" – ie. a person testing positive for Covid-19 infection when in fact they are not infected. *If a student receives a positive rapid test result, the student will be tested again, immediately, with a further rapid test, and then be taken to a*

*testing centre for a more definitive PCR test.* Please be assured, RBC has an experienced and committed staff and generally sensible students, and we will do our best to manage the circumstances.

Last Saturday RBC celebrated "Spring Day". During the morning students worked in their Personal Tutor groups on different projects on the college grounds. Students were invited to different (mostly cultural workshops) after lunch. We then enjoyed a student-prepared international food fair with delicious food and with ice-cream from RBC nurse Tracy. This was followed by more workshops and some "wide" games (including Capture the Flag – no injuries to report this year!). The evening finished with a lovely cultural show. Several students chose to wear their National Dress (or the National Dress of a friend) for the afternoon and evening.

Last week's student-led Global Affairs (the final one of the Semester) was presented by the LGBTQI+ student community at RBC. It included presentations on the situations (and trends) in several countries, and student testimonials. I am always deeply moved when I hear people speak, in vulnerability, of their personal and family histories, histories that include lack of acceptance, of exclusion and even, in some instances, of violence and persecution, simply for being who they are. One of the ways we learn at UWC is first discovering our common humanity, then being moved by the struggles of these individuals who have become our associates and friends, students and colleagues, then moving to a position of solidarity with their struggles for justice and full human rights.

On Friday 16th and Monday, 19th April, the Theatre CAS performed their interpretation of *Metamorphoses* by Marie Zimmerman. Students and members of staff were invited to enter the world of Greek mythology - with a modern twist. The two-hour play involving a student team of twelve revolved around the complexities in love relationships, relationships that inevitably are subject to change.

Please find attached the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the student publication *Our Map* for your possible interest.

With best wishes,



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