

9th August 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians of Incoming Students,

Earlier today, Director of Studies Dr. Helen White wrote to your children, our incoming students, providing them with further information regarding the logistics of their arrival at Frankfurt Airport (where they will be met by staff and with buses to bring them to Campus), or Freiburg Main Train (and Bus) Station, or directly on Campus. Because most of our students will travel independently of their Parents and Guardians, the letter sent directly to them rather than to you is a little acknowledgement of their step into a more autonomous, and hopefully a more responsible phase of their lives!

I suspect that for most UWC Robert Bosch College (RBC) Parents and Guardians, saying goodbye to your child as they journey to RBC is a moment of transition, for many a moment not only of excitement and anticipation for what lies ahead for your child, but also a moment of separation and loss. Most students gain a new sense of independence as they move into a UWC. They build a new and profound set of experiences and friendships whose meaning is difficult to share, fully, with those back home. The journey of making sense of themselves and of the wider world often speeds up; the journey to adulthood where values and beliefs are embraced not simply because they are the values of home or local society, but re-explored then re-embraced, or refined, or even rejected (and other beliefs and values embraced).

It is the privilege of the RBC Staff to accompany your child, our student, on that journey for the next two years. Our task is a complex one. Institutionally, we cannot fully accommodate the reality that each student is at a different point of their journey towards autonomy and responsibility. At least some of how things are structured is based on a general understanding of the readiness of our students to be autonomous and responsible, and within the framework of German law around boarding schools for the 16 to 18-year age range. As RBC creates the “space” for that ongoing journey to autonomy and responsibility, there is a fundamental tension between keeping your children, our students, in contexts where we can be certain that they are “safe” – and allowing them the “space” for vital growth in autonomy and responsibility. For within two years almost all our new graduates will be entering further education or gap years (or the world of work), where there is hugely less detailed institutional interest in their overall wellbeing. RBC’s approach is to structure daily points of interaction with staff, and at least brief contact with a member of staff each evening, this instead of an approach based on many restrictions reinforced through surveillance. Intentionally, RBC does not have a member of staff physically present in every activity that students do. RBC is fortunate to be in what would be regarded as a safe small city, in what in global terms is a safer part of the world. RBC also is fortunate in its staff – people who are extraordinarily committed to the overall welfare of the students, *their* students!, but who understand that they have to create “space” for students further to discover and follow their own impulses - as well as to discover their limitations and boundaries. Yes, sometimes the “wheels come off”, but if this happens, we also hope that your child, our student, will find the support they need at RBC to get back on track.

I look forward to being your child’s Rektor for the next almost two years, witnessing their growth, and eventually their next steps. I look forward to witnessing not only individual

ambition individually realized, but a growing sense of friendship and mutual support within the college community. A growing sense of human solidarity must be part of the foundation of our response to the many urgent challenges (including those of climate change, and in many parts of the world, of peace) and the opportunities that face us.

For Parents and Guardians able to bring their children directly to Campus on Thursday 26th August: because of Covid-19 precautions sadly we will not be able to show you around the Campus. Sadly, you will not be invited to enter the Student Village, or the Kartaus and Auditorium area. There is a small parking area at the entrance to the Kartaus, and my intention is to be available at the parking area from 10am to 6pm that day to greet Parents and Guardians. I sincerely wish that it would be possible to give you a warmer welcome...

Further on Covid-19 circumstances: I am pleased to report that none of our incoming students currently is prevented from entering Germany due to the Covid-19 situation in their home country/region. (A few students' countries were taken off the German exclusion list on the 1st August – not all of these students have yet been granted visas and we are holding thumbs for them that they will be able to get to RBC relatively quickly and before the cut-off date of 3rd October.) All students will be tested for Covid-19 infection as they enter RBC-provided transport at Frankfurt Airport, or as they enter Campus for the first time, and then a couple of times a week thereafter until further notice. Almost all 2nd year students and members of staff already are vaccinated. The 1st year students who are not yet Covid-19 vaccinated will be taken to the Freiburg Vaccination Centre a few days after their arrival for their 1st vaccination, and at the appropriate time for their 2nd.

I look forward to keeping in contact with you including through letters to Parents and Guardians every few weeks. Should you wish to write to me, please write in a language in which you are comfortable!

With best wishes,



Laurence Nodder
Rektor

cc. National Committees