

23rd February 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

With regret and as previously hinted at, I now write to confirm that the decision has been taken that this year's Closure Ceremony for graduating students will not be open to Parents, Guardians, family and friends. Instead, it is planned to livestream the Ceremony.

I wish circumstances were different.

The Auditorium is RBC's only indoors venue for an event of this size, and yes, it has rained around the time of several previous Closure Ceremonies. Gathering around 300 people in the Auditorium in tight formation, around half who will have come from many different parts of the world, can only be described as a potential "super-spreader" event. While many parts of Europe are moving towards an approach of dropping restrictions despite the reality of high Covid-19 infection rates but (probably) manageable hospitalization rates, the reality is that Covid-19 is not eliminated and there are waves of infection in different parts of the world. It also is the nature of things that the Delta and Omicron variants most likely are not the last variants – especially with ongoing and widespread infections – and a future variant might lead to more serious health consequences than most Omicron-infected people experience.

More positively, RBC again is in a position to welcome Parent and Guardian visits, especially over weekends. We ask that visitors are double vaccinated and "boosted", or recently recovered. We ask visitors to take a rapid antigen test on arrival (and that it is negative!). We ask Parent and Guardian visitors not to enter the student village, or the Mensa and Auditorium – for these are places of relatively high student density. But there still is much to see around the Campus. Parent and guardian visitors also may take their children out, for example for a meal, and be joined by student friends. We ask that students sleep overnight at RBC.

Should a parent or guardian need a letter for a visa to visit RBC, please contact me.

A personal reflection: I have been the Head at 31 Graduations / Closure Ceremonies, and also have a child who graduated from UWC Pearson College. At Pearson College, parents were not invited to the closure ceremony. Instead, we were invited to attend on a designated weekend earlier during the Spring Semester. My wife and I are convinced that we had more opportunity to spend time with our son and his friends, getting to know them, getting to explore with them the Campus and the surrounding areas, than the Parents and Guardians that came for the graduation / closure ceremonies at UWC Waterford Kamhlaba and more recently at UWC Robert Bosch College. The downside, I observe, of coming for a graduation / closure ceremony is that one's child, together with all other 2nd year students, is busy in the high emotion of saying goodbye to their friends and to this community / place, packing up and tidying up. Their main focus is not on their Parents or Guardians over their final weekend at RBC.

A week ago, I wrote informing you of a likely Covid-19 infection on Campus. Last weekend, the PCR test result came back positive. I am pleased to report that the student did not experience severe symptoms. I also am pleased to report that it seems that the virus has not spread more widely. The student's roommates were asked to test daily for five days (and to follow some further precautions). RBC continues with antigen testing for all students on Mondays and Thursdays (and all members of staff test at least twice weekly). So far, there have been no further positive test results.

In addition to the "regular" classes and CAS activities, last week was celebrated at RBC as Black Culture Week – prepared as one of the projects of the recent Project Week. It culminated in a wonderful Saturday evening show. RBC runs its "normal" programme this week Monday to Thursday; Friday is set aside for RBC's Model United Nations Special Focus Day. 2nd year students have a one-day reading break before their Mock Examinations start on Friday 4th March.

Please feel welcome to write to me, if you so wish, in a language of your comfort, even though my reply most likely will be in English.

With best wishes,

Laurence Nodder

Rektor

laurence.nodder@uwcrobertboschcollege.de