

31st August 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Orientation process and programme are running well. I am impressed by the way students are integrating within and across the two year groups, and creating community – to begin with especially in their Student Houses. Today, 1st year students received an introduction to the academic programme at RBC. Their (initial) subject choices will be finalized tomorrow (Thursday) in meetings with Dr Christian Bock (Director of Studies). I say “initial” because it will be possible for students to request a change on the 13th September and again on the 27th September (class size of requested classes permitting). But we always remind students that it is wise to be as confident as possible in the initial subject selection, as any subsequent change leaves weeks of introductory coursework to be caught up (as the students’ responsibility). The regular academic timetable starts on Monday 5th September.

A handful of students has tested positive for Covid-19 infection since their arrival (each person tested negative on arrival), and each “positive” student has been accommodated in isolation from non-infected students. This was most likely to happen. Experience has shown that long-distance travel carries risks for Covid-19 infection, infection likely only to become apparent a few days later. I wrote to you on the 10th August outlining RBC’s likely response in this situation. In short, infected students are and will be isolated (some double rooms and now an empty staff apartment have been set aside for this purpose, though if numbers increase significantly students might need to be “isolated” within their own rooms). Students and staff are offered the possibility of keeping themselves and others safer by wearing masks (masks always are available). We continue to test all students twice a week at this stage, to increase confidence that there isn’t a big rise in unknown infections. And as soon as I have a final list of names of students requiring Covid-19 vaccinations, vaccinations will be arranged.

We live in and interact with a society that at this stage has few mandated precautions against Covid-19 infection, and I do not think it makes sense to come to a UWC to live in a two-year lock-down with no interaction even with members of staff who live off-campus, or with wider society. Put simply, the risks are low of serious illness to your children, our students. We accept, reluctantly, that there likely will be an ongoing low to moderate level of Covid-19 infections within RBC in the coming weeks.

Open Day

RBC still plans on holding an Open Day from midday to 5pm on Saturday 17th September. We hope to meet with at least some of our regional parents and guardians, and families! We will announce Covid-19 precautions closer to the time.

Project Week

RBC continues to plan for the October Project Week to proceed (Sunday 2nd to Friday 7th October), with the big majority of students travelling to and engaging in Projects beyond Freiburg. The proposed Projects were finalized earlier this week, and yesterday (Tuesday) evening students enjoyed a “speed dating” with the leaders of different Projects before

submitting their 1st choices. Inevitably, many students will not get their first choice. Not getting one's first choice is an opportunity for learning. Very few of us pass through life always getting our first choices. As is the case at most UWCs, RBC was not the first choice for the majority of our students! Experience shows that in time students learn to treasure the opportunities that they receive, the friendships and shared experiences, the shared learning.

Please feel free to write to me in a language of your comfort. I will find a colleague to help translate, or will use a translation tool. I apologize that I write only in English.

With best wishes,

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