

14 July 2020



Dear Parents and Guardians of boarders,

Further to my previous two boarder-specific letters, this letter seeks to update the progress we are making on preparations for September. I will do this in sections. Some of this is specific to overseas boarders, but it is written to all nevertheless.

UK national boarding response:

As previously mentioned, one thing we know for sure from any number of academic articles is that the risk to children themselves from COVID-19 is *extremely* low. However, it is our duty to reduce this risk as far as we possibly can both for the boys in our care and the adults who are with them. As such, we will comply with the guidelines set out by the Boarding Schools Association, the leading UK Boarding Schools Association (BSA) of which we are a member, in their "Covid-Safe Charter", accessible [here](#). The BSA has also published the charter in the following languages; [Chinese](#), [German](#) and [Russian](#).

You can tell from [this list of schools](#) that this is a sector wide approach:

We believe UK boarding to be amongst the best in the world, and you can be assured that we are sharing good practice in all we do in our desire to keep all boys healthy and happy at school.

Quarantine:

We will be offering quarantine to those boys who need it. The list of countries currently *exempt* from quarantine is [here](#).

If your country is not on this list, then you will need to quarantine for 14 days before going to class. Please aim to arrive, therefore, between 17 and 19 August. All other boarders should aim to arrive at school for the start of term as usual. Please do contact your son's Housemaster if you have difficulty in achieving this. An important principle in all we do is that we will not let down any of your children! Do please let your son's Housemaster know any worries you have and we will try to help you to fix them.

We need now some firm indication of who will be taking up this offer of quarantine, please, so that we can plan for your son's arrival. I have included [here](#) the link to a form for you to fill out. We will then help you with transport from the airport, should you need.

Upon arrival at the school, your son will be in isolation (with due adult care and supervision of course) and will be tested within 24 hours of arrival (wherever possible). After a negative test, he will then be able to continue his quarantine in a slightly less isolated manner. He will still not be

allowed into town or to mix with the local population, but he will at least be able to use the school site a bit more freely, subject to our own restrictions and risk assessment for his safety.

Isolation:

Should a boarder fall ill, either in quarantine or during term time, he will be immediately isolated in an isolation boarding house (we currently have a residential study centre not in use and will re-purpose it as an isolation boarding house called George Godber House – named after an Old Bedfordian who helped found the NHS). He will be immediately tested; a positive test will mean that he will be isolated for 7 days and his close contacts will also be isolated for 14 days. During this period, they will reside in George Godber House, which will be run by the Senior Boarding Housemaster, Mr Chris Bury, who has 9 years of recent Boarding Housemaster experience. There will be a full team onsite to provide support and 24 hour medical support on call.

Blended learning:

We remain fully committed to making in-class lessons available out of class too, so that if a boy has to miss a day or two (or indeed longer) for whatever reason, he will still be able to receive the class online. Our overall perspective on this is that the boy's education must continue (for pastoral, and social, as well as academic reasons; and indeed for family logistics) and we must do all we can to ensure that it is both excellent and safe.

House rules:

It will be important for us to ensure that boys' mindsets are changed with regards to daily life, for the safety of all, whilst also striking an acceptable balance between physical and mental wellbeing. House rules will be entirely designed to keep the possibility of infection to an absolute minimum. There will be extensive hygiene requirements in place (from the moment you enter the building), masks readily available in common rooms and enhanced cleaning services. There will be a no contact policy in place; and wash facilities will be restricted to small groups of individuals.

Guardians:

As mentioned previously, and as is quite normal in UK boarding schools, all overseas boys are required to have a guardian in the UK. Now is a very good time to reassure yourself that those guardians are reliable and helpful. If you find that is not the case, do please get in touch with us at school and we will see if we can help (via your son's Housemaster).

Exeats:

We advise that you use guardians as normal, please, for first weekend exeat (evening of 25 until evening of 27 September); but (exceptionally) we will also be prepared to host your son here at school if you need. Guardians must however be organised for half term (16 October to 1 November), in order to give the House staff teams a break. However, as usual, please be assured that if there are issues, particularly coronavirus-related, then we have already shown at the end of the Spring Term (when some needed to stay here for up to a week after schools closed) that we take our responsibilities towards looking after your children seriously.

If there are any further questions, please do email your son's Housemaster. We look forward very much to seeing your boys in the coming weeks.

With my kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Hodgson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Hodgson
HEAD MASTER

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