



Dear Parents and Guardians,

My highlight this week has been visiting boarding houses in the evenings (I almost have the full set since the start of term). What a happy group we have! New routines are not easy for boys to get used to, but they have been brilliant in every respect and have enjoyed renewing the friendships which great boarding uniquely brings. In many ways, if it is possible, the current situation brings them even closer. The atmosphere is openly friendly and cheerful; new boys have been settling well; and it has been good to catch up with them all.

I start today's letter with non-Covid news.

### **Bedford School sport – a remarkable week**

It is perhaps unusual to start with this, given the circumstances, but it has been a remarkable week for Bedford School sport...

**Bedford School** won 'Best for Sport' in The Week magazine's Independent Schools Guide last week. It praised both the breadth and depth of our offer. This came on the back of a week or two in which Bedford School's sport was showcased in the most remarkable way through its current and OB successes in a huge range of activity.

In the field:

- **Darcy McBride** (Lower Sixth) became the youngest person since 1948 to win the British Open U21 (Clay Pigeon) Shooting competition.
- No fewer than four Old Bedfordians lined up for Northants in County Championship and/or T20 games during the last week: **Emilio Gay (11-18)**, **Alex Wakely (96-07)**, **Charlie Thurston (07-14)** and **Harry Gouldstone (12-19)**.
- The current statistics for the (county cricket) Bob Willis Trophy show **Sir Alastair Cook (98-03)** and **Charlie Thurston (07-14)** ranked fifth and eighth respectively in the number of runs scored.
- **Benedict Eggeling (14-17)** was in the German gold medal men's eight in the recent European Rowing Under 23 Championship held in Duisburg, Germany.
- After being selected for Eddie Jones' England squad in the last Six Nations Championship, **George Furbank (13-15)** and **Fraser Dingwall (13-17)** recently renewed their contracts with the Northampton Saints. **Kayde Sylvester (17-19)**, fresh from the Upper Sixth, has just moved up to the Senior Academy there.
- **OB Ethan Vernon (07-18)** represented Team GB at the recent cycling European Championships in Plouay, France.

And in the commentary box:

- **Ned Boulting (78-86)** is the lead commentator on this year's Tour de France on ITV4.
- **Matt Chilton (76-81)** has been commentating on the recent Triathlon World Championships held in Hamburg. Matt is currently the lead commentator for Ski Sunday.
- **Martin Bayfield (80-85)** is Gallagher Premiership Rugby anchor-man for BT Sport.
- **Sam Roberts (85-96; and yes, our very own Prep School teacher!)** commentated on the Leicester v Sale game over the weekend.

Not a bad few days for Bedford Sport, therefore. No pressure on the current crop...! You can read the full story [here](#).

## **Summer 2020 exams**

This has been a most unsatisfactory summer, of course, for the boys who were supposed to be taking exams this year. As a school, we decided very early on that we would not publish detailed exam results in the normal way (for obvious reasons). However, we are pleased to share with you the outcomes for the leaving Upper Sixth. They are truly excellent and we are proud of the boys' tenacity and resilience in a very challenging year; we wish them all well as they head off to new pastures. There are still one or two boys making decisions, but the list is very nearly complete. The full story can be read [here](#).

## **Tatler Good Schools' Guide**

Tatler magazine makes an annual review of those schools it chooses to put into its Good Schools' Guide. (Their correspondents visit every other year.) You can read the 2020 review [here](#).

## **Extra-curricular clubs**

In the Upper School, Dr Chen and Nikolai Sorokin (this year's President) opened the Chinese Society this week with Nikolai presenting his research on 'Sino-Russian Relationship Post Soviet Union'. Various extra-curricular sports will also start next week. You will begin to see a number of new opportunities opening up now for boys, all risk assessed, as we get used to the new timetable and the ways to work within it.

## **Coronavirus updates**

### **a) Unwell children**

One or two boys have come to school this term conspicuously unwell. This is obviously very unsociable these days, so may I please respectfully remind all parents to keep such boys at home.

### **b) Remote lessons**

We have had a few requests from day boys with injuries or who are unwell to join lessons remotely, please note that remote lessons are only intended for boys who are currently self-isolating following healthcare advice (rather than normal absence).

### **c) New cases locally**

Bedford Borough had 10 new cases last week (from 145,000 people). This is almost as low as it has been, which is good news.

### **d) Boys taking a test**

We are being (rightly, I hope you will agree) extremely cautious in our approach towards illness (in conjunction with NHS 111). So far, we have had about a dozen tests in our school community this term; all tests (apart from the most recent one – still pending) have come back within 24 hours and all have been negative. This does cause some disruption occasionally to a small number of others, not least in boarding houses, but it is worth ensuring (for the benefit of all) that we are Covid-free.

### **e) However**

Yesterday, in my Friday lunchtime assembly, I asked boys and staff in the Upper School to put on their masks in corridors and lunch queues, as well as indoor zone areas (in which faces were already covered). It had become pretty obvious after a week at school that these could be congested areas at times; given the events of this week, we should take heed of the Government warnings that cases have been on the rise nationally and respond accordingly. Please could you remember to furnish your son with a zip-up plastic bag for his face mask.

### **f) Hand gel**

Increased wearing of masks raises the importance of personal hand gel at school; as does the ability to play ball (football, rugby) at break times.

### **g) Lunches**

It is pretty challenging to get 1,400 people through lunch in about 90 minutes under Covid conditions. It is also the most emotive part of the day for teenage boys (and staff, in fact!). To some extent, we are the victims of our own success in normal times, as the lunches are usually amazing. It is inevitable, I am afraid, that there will not be the usual choice; but we remain determined to provide a decent hot lunch, if at all possible. Every day, we have tweaked processes; and every day we feel it is improving. The catering staff are working like Trojans. We will keep at it...

To you all, as ever, thank you.

With kind regards indeed,

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

James Hodgson  
HEAD MASTER