



Dear Boarding families,

It has been a little while since I wrote specifically to boarding families and I trust that this letter finds you, and your loved ones, in good health. I hope you do not mind my expressing some pride in the community here at school for the way that everybody got on with the job at hand so brilliantly in the first half of term. All lessons have been well-taught, much extra-curricular has taken place, and friendships have been renewed and strengthened. Well done to your boys for their role in this.

Our SAMBA testing machine was installed just before half term and we had our first test on the day before half term started. It seemed almost miraculous that somebody who had felt a little unwell before school on Friday had been given the all-clear by breaktime on Friday morning! Accordingly, there will be much less disruption here to boys and staff after half term than there would be at most schools, which is a great boost for us all.

We have remained open at half term for those boys who needed it. There were 18 in the end. Over 60 teaching staff members freely volunteered their holiday time to create activities for them and to help look after them, which I think shows the strength of our community. The boys have had a good rest and some fun, too. I saw them all last night and they were very happy – apparently archery tag, rock climbing and drone racing had been the highlight activities!

We will remain open for the second Exeat of this term (the weekend of 21 and 22 November) for those who need it. Please could you let your son's Housemaster know if you do wish them to stay. Like the first Exeat weekend, there will be a charge of £150 (£75 per night) to do this.

Unfortunately, and I do hope you can understand this, the school is planning to close for the Christmas holiday. It is important that the boarding staff get some time off to recharge their batteries and (hopefully) see their own families; this will benefit everybody in the New Year. We will offer quarantine at school upon return in January, should it be needed then, for arrivals between 2 and 6 January; and we will of course understand if any overseas boys need to fly home before the end of this term, so as to maximise the time they can spend with their own families over the Christmas break. I hope that this is helpful; I do encourage early discussion of your arrangements with your son's Housemaster, so that all have a measure of confidence in the next steps. We may also be able to help anybody with recommendations in the UK if you cannot find somewhere suitable for your son to stay; as ever, we will not abandon your boys, of course, and especially when things are difficult.

The majority of the boarding community has been back with us this term and enjoyed strong education; and there appears to be a determination from the Government to keep all schools open regardless of measures taken elsewhere in the country. We are currently expecting some of the remaining boys to return next week (we look forward to seeing them!) and all to return by January. Whilst we have only had one case at school so far, we are also currently looking at a further tightening of our own defences for the approach to Christmas. It is undoubtedly better for their education to be here together.

I do hope that, for those who have not been on site, the remote learning has gone well; and also that you have felt well connected to the school. If you have some thoughts on how we can do things even better, then please do let me know – I will happily spend time online with any families who would like some time with me, or who have some recommendations for us. One of the great pleasures of the last few months has been to connect with the global Bedford School community (current and old

boys) in exactly the same way that we have connected with many local families – it makes the world feel so small, and helps us to celebrate humanity in all its richness and diversity; and we are so lucky to be part of such a wonderful global community of friends.

I wish you all well, from all at your school.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Hodgson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Hodgson
HEAD MASTER