Dear overseas boarding families,

I hope that you are well. I am sorry that this situation here in Bedford seems to be so unpredictable at the moment. I thought you would appreciate some help with your decision making for the New Year, which I know must be difficult.

Firstly, I must stress that, at the time of this email, all of my advice in the letters I sent on 18 December is still valid.

However, the news in the UK currently is that more of the country will be in a Tier 4 lockdown (i.e. almost total lockdown) after Christmas. At the moment, the Government tells us that all schools will stay open from 11 January, even if they are in a Tier 4 zone (as Bedford currently is); but there is also a chance that they will change their mind on schools being open so soon in January.

If the Government does in fact close schools, Bedford School will teach fully online from 4 January (as you already know); but I also want to let you know that boarding houses will still remain open from 2 January (though preferably 4 January; whatever the Government decision) and boys can access online learning from there, even if the school is closed. We will try to keep Fifth Form and Upper Sixth mocks going as a priority (onsite from 5 January), if we are allowed to do so; however, our back up plans for mocks are much more likely to see a delay to live mocks rather than a move online.

You may well find that it is hard to get flights to the UK; we understand that. Our advice remains to try to get back when you can; and we will support your son fully once he gets here. We will continue to do all we can to help you ensure that his health and his education are supported to the highest possible standards. We will of course be engaging with the Government mass testing schemes, as well as using our own SAMBA machine.

I hope this helps; and that you can find some peace this Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

James Hodgson
HEAD MASTER