



Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope that this letter finds you well and that half term has been a happy one for your family, given all the circumstances. We are delighted that the Prime Minister has prioritised schools and found a way for us all to come back from 8 March. This letter is just confirmation that we aim to follow the Government guidance closely and look forward to having your children back with us.

That Government guidance is 67 pages long (so far!) and came out last night; so please do keep an eye on your Bedford emails for regular updates before 8 March. The areas which need to be finalised in the coming days include:

- a) **Onsite testing for the whole community of staff and pupils** (about 1,500 people). We are well-prepared for this; but obviously now that we have dates and more details, we need to finalise the specifics.
- b) **Onsite protocols for a safe return**. We are also well-prepared for this; but we will aim to be safer than ever by 8 March.
- c) **Teaching and learning**. The Government has announced tighter safety protocols in the classroom; and we will be providing online learning for those who cannot be in school this term (e.g. isolation cases; or overseas pupils who cannot return).
- d) **Boarding boys**. I will write separately to these families in the next 48 hours to outline plans for both term time and holidays, and for any quarantine and isolation provision, as well as safety protocols. As mentioned above, and given that there are only three weeks left of this term from 8 March, an online option will continue to run until the end of term to allow especially for overseas boarders who cannot return yet.
- e) **Extra-curricular activity**. This all needs to be assessed again against safety measures for each particular activity. However, we are very aware of the need for boys to start socialising, playing sport together and enjoying a rich variety of activity.
- f) **Pupils in exam years**. We continue to give these boys considerable thought and planning time, hoping to bring as much calm and certainty as we can to an uncertain situation. Both boys and staff have been excellent so far; and Mr Baldock has circulated details about the preparation assessments this morning for GCSE and A-Level. We still plan to run these next week, before the boys return, which will allow for three weeks of clear teaching before Easter, assessing gaps in knowledge and preparing for the higher stakes testing next term. Mr Finch has written separately to IB boys and families.

We will write to you with details of the above, and more, no doubt, in the coming days.

In the meantime, there is reassurance in a date. I am sure I heard a number of champagne corks pop last night; but we also realise that this will not be an easy transition back for everybody. There will inevitably be a complex range of responses, which is what makes our job so wonderfully rewarding. However, overwhelmingly, we are excited to be coming back.

With all best wishes indeed,

James Hodgson
Head Master