



Dear Parents and Guardians of overseas boarders,

I am sorry that it has been a while since I was last in contact with you by letter, but I do hope that you feel you have had good communication with the school from a variety of avenues, and that you and your boys are well. If you long for more communication, please do let us know!

There is lots of good news at the moment; and also plenty of uncertain news. The good news is that cases are dropping dramatically in the UK as lockdown bites and the effects of the vaccination programme take hold. This is true in Bedford, as well as in the whole country. Cases, of course, are still extremely high and we are as determined as ever to be extra careful; but the signs are that we will finally get some control over the virus in the near future. I do hope that this summer will be a happy one.

Secondly, I have been having many meals in the Dining Hall with the 40 boarders who are here at school. They have been happy and chatty. It is not easy for them, of course, being far from home and having online lessons, but most are making some new friends, and are enjoying the benefits of a huge and wonderful campus. They have continued with their sports and last week we added building snowmen to the activity list! It looks like more snow may come this weekend, too, which they will enjoy.

We are very aware that it is Chinese New Year next week and some of the boys (including some old boys) have made a nice assembly for the school; and we hope to plan a couple of nice (safe, of course) events for the boys who are on site, so that we can spoil them a bit!

In sadder news, you may have heard that Captain Sir Tom Moore, whose grandson is in the Bedford School Lower Sixth Form, and who raised over £40m for the National Health Service, died this week aged 100. He was a lovely, generous man and a beacon of kindness for us all. We have sent our respects to the family; and I have been on television and radio a bit in the last few days and we hope to be able to release those short interviews to you soon.

You have all the news about exams, and it remains extremely uncertain exactly how grades will be decided this year. The message from us is that the boys simply need to keep working hard, as they have always done, and as if it were a “normal” year. It is not easy for them; but there is no other obvious way. If they do their best now, it is all anybody can ask of them. We must all keep them motivated; and also calm and full of perspective and love.

Arrangements for half-term

We would prefer those boys who are already here to stay here at half term. Being locked down onsite feels safest of all; we have only had one case of transmission this term and that seems to have come in from outside the school. So, if at all possible, please do consider leaving your son with us. The charge per night is usually £75, but we will make it £50 this time (i.e. a subsidy) because we are explicitly making this request. However, we do realise that some of the boys already have plans, and particularly with family whom they have not seen for a while. We will allow this, of course. However, if a boy stays off-site at half-term, he will return after half-term to George Godber House (our quarantine and isolation house) for four days, during which he will be tested twice (i.e. on days 1 and 4). Two negative tests will release him back into his normal boarding house with the other boys. This, I think, is a sensible precaution to keep all boys safe; and currently is likely to happen when day boys return too.

Arrangements for the next half of term

At the moment, the Government has said that the earliest schools will re-open is on 8 March. They will not confirm this until they are more certain about the virus. They have told us that they will definitely let us know two weeks in advance of any opening date; and therefore they plan to make an announcement on February 22nd to give us the most current position. We will obviously let you know when they do.

Arrangements for the Easter Holidays:

We still have some work to do on this – and we need some more information ourselves – so I hope you do not mind if I communicate this at a later date. The likelihood is that we will close for at least the first part of the holidays, on the grounds that boys and staff need a break. Naturally, and I hope you know this by now, we care very much about your boys and we will not abandon anybody! I will confirm this as soon as I can.

Though this has not yet been confirmed, we do fully expect at the very least to all be back at school for the summer term – and we certainly look forward to it!

I do hope that this information is all useful. Do please get in touch with us, usually via your Housemaster first and foremost, with any questions. We will always want to help.

I look forward so much to being back together in person one day soon. In the meantime, and in anticipation of the Year of the Ox, 新年快乐! 恭喜发财! 身体健康! I wish you all, wherever you are, luck and good fortune.

Yours sincerely,



James Hodgson
HEAD MASTER

Bedford School,
De Parys Avenue
Bedford
MK40 2TU

Tel: 01234 362211 (PA)

www.bedfordschool.org.uk