



Gaesdon Parents Letter

No. 23/2020-21

18.12.2020

Dear Gaesdonck families
dear parents

The **bright sunshine that has** bathed the campus in a warm, friendly light all day today makes it somewhat difficult to develop Advent or even Christmas feelings. Just as the year has turned this world upside down since the early days of March, it is also ending: in a disturbingly very different way than usual.

Without a real defined ending, there has been a strange silence on our campus for several days now due to the early Christmas holidays and the subsequent lockdown. In the meantime, the boarding houses are also emptying and also our students in Years 5 to 7 are on their way now to their well-deserved holidays since 1.10 pm.

Our thoughts are especially with our **international students** at the moment, many of whom have started to travel home under difficult conditions to finally see their families again - most of them for the first time in a year.

We will spare you another review of the year at this point. However, we can safely say that we have all added terms to our vocabulary that we did not know a year ago: "Corona", "Covid-19", "contact category", "rapid test", "AHA rule", "incidence rate" and many more.

One thing is certain: we live in a different world than we did a year ago. Since this is likely to remain the case for some time to come, we in our boarding school community will continue to do our best to shape this reality as pragmatically and unagitatedly as possible. We have already praised the good cooperation of our students in several letters to parents over the last few months and would like to expressly repeat this at the end of this year: **Thank you for participating so well!**

We would also like to thank you as parents for your solidarity and cooperation. You have taken responsibility in many occasions, looked for individual ways to deal with infections or contact constellations and encouraged us again and again, not least through your positive and constructive feedback. Of course, it is not always possible to please everyone.

A big thank you also goes to the staff here at Gaesdonck, especially the colleagues in the teaching and educating, who have worked together throughout the year with a great deal of commitment and mutual solidarity to cope with these challenges. In fact, some of it was (to quote the Chancellor) "uncharted territory".

As an example, we would like to mention the many colleagues who have worked on the development of digital teaching. We can assure you that this project is much more extensive than it looks at first glance.

It is not enough to simply put a camera in the classroom and then pretend that nothing is wrong, as some politicians or media reports might suggest. Thus, the discussions of the last few months were repeatedly interspersed with questions about which didactic concerns can best be depicted through which medium and via which access route, how these can be realised by the students at home, what is a good balance between video teaching, self-learning times or Moodle tasks in which subject, or how one can always better structure a joint procedure that is coordinated between 65 class and subject teachers, level and course leaders.

What is also not visible is the great commitment of the IT managers, the caretaker and the craftsmen here on site, who have not infrequently worked night shifts or weekends to ensure that our system can also handle this and that the network at the Gaesdonck has run very stably even at peak times and has not collapsed. In this respect, too, we would like to give a virtual round of applause to all those involved.

Of course, we are far from finished on this path. But we are confident that we are well prepared for January – whatever it will be then.

The above-mentioned pragmatism also includes dealing with this pandemic in a serious but not frightening way, especially with our younger pupils.

We would like to share a nice example with you at the end of the school year: In the last few days, students of our Year 6 and their PE teacher Pawel Zalewski have developed a **sports game called "Corona Ball"**, which playfully implements the most important rules of conduct in the current situation. The children had so much fun that even the WDR (West German Broadcasting) came to the school today to film a report on these last lessons of the school year. If you are curious, you can see the report **tonight at 7.30 p.m. on WDR - Lokalzeit Duisburg** or at a later time for a week in the WDR media library.



After the match is before the match

Of course, no one can say with certainty at present how and under what conditions we will resume classes in January. From the current perspective, however, it seems certain that our boarders will arrive on Sunday, 10 January 2021. We will communicate the process of re-arrival and the accompanying hygiene measures in good time.

Please take a look at the Corona blog on our website again regularly after the turn of the year.

For today, however, we say goodbye and leave to the early Christmas holidays. For the days off ahead, we wish you and your families from the bottom of our hearts

**a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
and a good start
into a happy and healthy new year 2021!**

Yours sincerely from Gaesdonck campus

Dr Markus Oberdörster
Director

Doris Mann
Headmistress

Michael Gysbers
Head of Boarding Houses