



from Tom Lawson MA (Oxon), Headmaster

16 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I know that hsms have been in contact and continue to provide encouragement and support. We are desperately missing those pupils still away and cannot wait to see them back at school. I wanted to write to you personally given the extraordinary situation we find ourselves in with the current flight restrictions from the UK to Hong Kong. While I hope this will be reviewed and revised well before 30 September 2021, the reasons behind such a decision have not been officially confirmed and therefore do not enable me to provide an informed view. I can tell you that the Boarding School Association is in conversation with the British authorities to exert whatever pressure they can.

It is particularly frustrating that this line is taken on UK flights just as we see the tide turning with rapid falls in Covid in the UK, and Eastbourne in particular, as well as a fast, efficient vaccine programme which protects and also reduces transmission.

With the Government guidance now allowing all international pupils (red list countries included) to quarantine within their boarding school, we are actively encouraging all pupils to return for the summer term. First and foremost this is **their school** and we want them to be back, in person, continuing their journey with us and being with their friends to enjoy the social experience. Many parents have already confirmed arrangements, using guardians to quarantine prior to the start of term or taking advantage of our offer to have pupils quarantining in house from 5 April. In addition, and specifically for those pupils in Year 11 and Year 13, while the final details are not confirmed just yet, we would encourage pupils to return to take part in the learning, revision and assessments next term in person.

As a parent I understand that you might still be wary of sending your child back to Eastbourne College due to the challenges of returning home, including yourself, should you want to visit.

Leading on from this, we are working with our trusted partners to explore a summer holiday 'camp' experience to support those children who will remain in the UK after this academic year. We will share more details when possible, but please know now that I confirm that residence in an Eastbourne College boarding house through this camp will be possible as a backup if the flight restriction is still in place. Alternatively, looking at the flight restrictions in other countries, should you have the time to incorporate a holiday when visiting your child, there is a possibility of flying back through another European country to fly back to Hong Kong.

As always, we are here to support you and will help in any way possible. If you want to discuss the return arrangements or any of the above in more detail, please do contact your housemaster or housemistress.

While many of our pupils have stayed, or already returned before Easter, it would be fantastic to see **all** pupils back next term. As I said before, they are very much the heartbeat of the school. We miss them.

With best wishes,

Tom Lawson

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