

## COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Updated Information and Advice for Students (and Parents)

Dear Students

I wanted to update you about the college's response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus). I know that some of you are feeling anxious about the possible consequences of the virus both on physical health and on your education. It is really important that you access information only through reliable and credible sources. There is a lot of misinformation currently in circulation which is not helpful and is likely to fuel further uncertainty and anxiety.

We do know that the spread and impact of the virus is changing rapidly. The college will continue to monitor the situation and to follow closely any changes to the Government's published plan.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>

We will also remain alert to healthcare information and advice from the World Health Organisation, Health and Safety Executive and Public Health England.

**The position continues to be for education and children's social care settings to remain open**, and the college will adhere to this recommendation, unless advised otherwise.

We have robust processes and procedures and are ready to put additional measures in place as required. Daily updates from the Department of Education provide advice for schools and colleges and we will implement any recommendations as they arise.

Our hope and intention is that the college will remain open and that the impact on our students' learning and overall educational experience will be minimised. However, in order to be proactively prepared for the eventuality of having to close, partially or wholly, we will ensure that all courses have made meaningful work available via Microsoft teams or Moodle or any other remotely accessed platform used in your subjects. Communication with you will primarily be through these platforms or college email system so please ensure that you check your account daily.

For those students worried about the exams, Ofqual have made a statement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/updated-statement-on-coronavirus>

The bottom line is that whatever happens, they will make sure nobody misses out or suffers as a result of this pandemic. It is possible exams could be moved to a later date. Universities will also be guided on ensuring fair access for all applicants and may have to delay the start of their term to accommodate any changes. This would be a national issue that would be dealt with by the government, so there is no point worrying at this stage, better to remain focused on preparing for the exams as currently timetabled.

### **Preventing spread of infection**

There are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of the virus including:

- Washing your hands often - with soap and water, or use hand sanitiser if handwashing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport. We recommend that you wash your hands:
  - Before leaving home
  - On arrival at college
  - After using the toilet

- After breaks and sporting activities
- Before eating any food, including snacks
- Before leaving college
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. See Catch it, Bin it, Kill it
- Staying at home if you feel unwell
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoiding close contact with people who are unwell
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Calling NHS 111 if you are worried about your symptoms or those of a friend or relative. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment

**Please note:**

- Face masks are not recommended to protect from infection, as there is no evidence of benefit from their use outside healthcare environments.
- People who have returned from Category 1 specified countries/areas in the last 14 days should self-isolate. This includes avoiding attending college until 14 days after they return. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk>
- People who have returned from Category 2 specified countries/areas in the last 14 days, are advised to stay at home if they develop symptoms.
- If you have been to an affected area/are advised to self-isolate/believe that you may have been exposed to the virus, please inform the college immediately.
- All other students should continue to attend college (unless advised not to by public health officials).

A very important point to note is that should we be advised to close, you should **keep your working schedule as dictated by your timetable**. Teachers will set your workload based on this and ensure you have adequate means to submit the work for feedback (teams, email, drop box etc.). If you are concerned you won't be able to work from home due to not having access to the internet or a device, please let your GST or teachers know so we can see what support we can provide.

Over the next week, it is essential that you check your email is functioning correctly and that your parents have received a copy of this email (if not, please tell your GST what their email address is so it can be updated).

Best wishes and I am sure that we can rely on your best efforts in not letting the situation impact on your progress and preparation and ultimately, your success this academic year.

Phil