

25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear students and parents

I trust this email finds you all keeping safe and well and that students had a restful break last week. The second spring half term has started with the country still in lockdown, but on Monday we heard from the Prime Minister the detail of the government's roadmap for relaxing lockdown restrictions from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March by reopening schools, followed by the publication of several different guidance documents. Our senior managers have been reviewing this guidance and discussed the key points at length in our meeting on Wednesday morning in order to agree our plans for reopening, as well as consulting more broadly with key members of the college community. I would now like to share these broad initial plans with you. We continue to work up the finer details as testing in particular is an enormous undertaking for the college, and Andrea John (VP Pastoral) and Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum) will be writing in the coming days to provide more guidance. We will also update and publish to the college website our latest Risk Assessment and FAQs.

In my previous communications you will remember that we have committed to returning to 100% onsite learning as soon as possible and that in the meantime we have developed outstanding blended learning delivery. That return to normality is now much closer and we are looking forward to our community coming fully together once again – but like the majority of local colleges this will not be possible during the next few weeks. We have installed a large new canopy in Denne Quad which will provide a significant new area of sheltered social space and converted the Duckering Hall into a second catering outlet with seating areas. However the Sports Hall, which had been taken over as a very large additional social space, will now need to be fully utilised for mass asymptomatic testing during the whole of the four weeks leading up to Easter, meaning social space is restricted too much to allow over 2,000 students onsite whilst ensuring social distancing. The [latest government guidance for colleges](#) is clear that blended learning can continue as necessary.

In summary, for the four weeks from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March to the end of spring term on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April, we will return to a very similar situation as we had pre-lockdown, with year groups attending onsite in an alternate weekly rota of 50/50 blended learning:

Dates	Attending at college	Distance learning
8/3 – 12/3	2A and Transition	1A and Transition
15/3 – 19/3	1A and Transition	2A and Transition
22/3 – 26/3	2A and Transition	1A and Transition
29/3 – 1/4	1A and Transition	2A and Transition
<b>Easter break</b>		

Note that from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March Transition students will return to 100% onsite attendance. Due to the need to test students before they return to the classroom:

- On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March all lessons will be suspended for 2A and Transition students so that they can come into college for their first test – around 500-600 on each day. Registers will be set to study leave.
- On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March all lessons will be suspended for 1A students so that they can come into college for their first test – again around 500-600 on each day. Registers will be set to study leave.
- Independent study equivalent to the lessons on those days will be set and completion of the work checked by teachers. Students will only attend college in order to undertake their test.

Further details about our arrangements for testing will be sent via email soon.

In terms of Covid-safety the same main rules apply, except that all staff and students will need to wear masks at all times indoors, including in classrooms, but no longer need to when outdoors (as long as social distancing is maintained):

<b>Keep your distance</b>	Observe the 1m+ rule.
<b>Wear a mask</b>	In all indoor spaces, including classrooms, but not required when outdoors (if 2m social distancing is observed)
<b>Wash hands regularly</b>	Use the hand sanitiser stations at the entrance to each building and each classroom and carry your own hand sanitiser with you at all times.
<b>Don't come to college if you have symptoms</b>	If you have <a href="#">symptoms</a> of COVID-19 however mild, self-isolate for at least 10 days from when your symptoms started. You should arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19 – go to <a href="#">testing</a> to arrange.

And finally, Ofqual have published today the outcome of their consultation into the awarding of grades this summer and we are studying the detail of the announcement. Rob Hussey will write to students and parents soon to provide an update and please rest assured that we will apply all of the guidance fairly and accurately as we did last year and to support all our learners in achieving their potential.

I know we are all pleased to see a brighter future ahead now and a clearer sense of timeframes for a return to a sense of normality. Thank you for your understanding whilst we implement mass testing and then are able to free up more social space to be able to welcome back all learners 100% onsite after Easter.

Kind Regards

Dan Lodge

Principal