

FAQs for autumn term v 5

THIS IS A LIVE DOCUMENT AND WILL BE UPDATED REGULARLY AS THE GUIDANCE CHANGES AND AS ADDITIONAL POINTS OF DETAIL ARE RAISED BY STUDENTS, STAFF AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY.

Key guidance

- [Further education COVID-19 operational guidance](#)
- [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed \(COVID-19\) infection](#)
- [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings](#)
- [What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges](#)

Context

Will autumn term mark a return to normality?

The government are very clear that positive cases remain at high levels, not all adults or young people have been vaccinated and there remains a very real risk due to the virus. All our community must remain alert, follow expectations and be ready for guidance to change. We have now moved into a new phase of 'continued caution' in which personal responsibility must be exercised by all individuals. Many legal restrictions have been lifted but expectations will replace them in part – for example, an expectation of wearing face masks on many types of public transport. At college we will continue to take a cautious approach that prioritises the safety of everyone in our community. However, it is a very positive step that from the start of teaching we will have more freedoms than before and as more and more people are vaccinated the risk of serious illness from the virus will lessen.

As the [updated Government guidance](#) states:

“This marks a new phase in the government’s response to the pandemic, moving away from stringent restrictions on everyone’s day-to-day lives, towards advising people on how to protect themselves and others, alongside targeted interventions to reduce risk. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to young people’s education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to young people are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for two doses by mid-September.”

Timetable

What timetable will students be following from the autumn term?

From the start of teaching in the autumn term all students will attend all lessons onsite, unless they are [positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms](#). In those cases, teachers will stream lessons live from the classroom.

Will breaks and lunch operate as usual?

Yes. There will be no longer be any staggering of breaks. To reduce congestion at peak times we will have the interim Café open in the ground floor of the Science building during the autumn and spring terms.

How will you monitor attendance and engagement?

All lessons will be registered as usual and the regular attendance monitoring procedures will apply.

Can I undertake work placements offsite?

Work placements for the specific courses that require them are allowed to take place.

Specific subject and enrichment changes

Will sport be taking place at College?
We will continue with physical Sports and PE lessons in a careful and contained way that follows the latest guidance . Sports fixtures can take place and advice will be given to teams by relevant staff. The gym will be open.
Will singing and music be taking place at College?
Our lessons for Music and Music Practitioners will continue but students and staff need to follow the latest guidance about what is allowed.
What is happening with Enrichment now restrictions are more relaxed?
All Enrichment activities can go ahead as planned. Student led activities are asked to maintain a list of attendees each session in case we need to support NHS Test and Trace. Students should exercise personal responsibility during sessions as the environment is less controlled than in a regular classroom.

Meetings, events and lettings

Will college events take place in the autumn term?
Until the end of December, all meetings will be limited to a maximum of 50 people at once in one of the larger meeting spaces (e.g. Lecture Theatre, Memorial Hall, Duckering Hall). Mass assemblies will be conducted online. We will review this arrangement in January 2022.
Will students or staff be having meetings?
All planned meetings will go ahead as usual but will be limited to 24 in a regular classroom or 50 in one of the larger meeting spaces until the end of December. No social distancing will be required, but individuals are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility.
What will happen with guest speakers and visitors to the college?
Guest speakers and visitors to the college will be allowed to meet with students up to a maximum of 50 students at a time. This will be reviewed in January. Videos or live streams should be considered for groups larger than 50. Regular peripatetic teachers can attend college.
Will any lettings be taking place at the college?
From September all lettings will be allowed.

Public areas of the college

Will the library be open?
The library will be fully open. All students and staff are expected to wear face masks when moving around the Library. Screens will continue to be in place for the time being.
Will the gym be open?
Yes – for lessons or individual use.
Will you have a one-way system around college?
We will continue to use our one-way system in areas where larger numbers are likely to congregate between lessons – such as certain corridors or entrances and exits to certain buildings. These will be clearly marked for all to see. We have also adopted a 'keep left' system in all corridors of the college.
How will exams be run?
Exams will always be held following the very latest stringent guidance ensuring the best safety arrangements for staff and students. Masks are not required during exams.

Cleaning

How will you maintain the college as safely as possible through cleaning?
Extra cleaning has been put in place during the daytime to focus particularly on contact points and in catering areas. All classrooms and social spaces will be provided with cleaning materials and students will clean their own tabletops and contact points at the end of each lesson or usage.
What hand sanitising arrangements will be in place?
A hand-cleaning point will also be provided at the entrance to each main building and hand sanitisers provided in every classroom. Students are encouraged to carry with them their own personal hand sanitiser as well.

Safety precautions

Do you have an up-to-date risk assessment?
Yes. This is always on the college website . We update this each time there is a change to the government or WSCC guidance. Major updates that significantly change the risk assessment are approved by the Chair of our Governing Body and our Health and Safety Officer.
How do you communicate health and safety advice to students, staff and visitors to your site?
We regularly communicate with students, staff and visitors through email, our internal bulletin, SharePoint, meetings and also through posters around the site including at Reception and outside the Student Services office. Regular email updates are sent to parents as well and key updates are added to the college website here and often sent out via social media as well.
Do I have to wear a face mask at college?
As of Thursday 25 th November following WSCC guidance, face masks are now required of all students, staff and visitors onsite in all corridors, social and catering areas when not eating or drinking, reception and in the library when moving around. Masks will not be required for those exempt or for anyone in classrooms, although of course individuals may choose to wear masks in class as well. We will review this additional arrangement in the new year.
How will rooms be set up for teaching?
We will follow the latest guidance carefully. All classrooms are set up where possible with rows of tables for students so that they all face forwards. This will not always be possible – for example in computer rooms, where computers face outwards or are separated by plastic screens. Teachers will usually teach from the front of the classroom and maintain 2m social distancing from students.
Is air-conditioning safe to use?
The latest HSE guidance explains that our rooms are independently air-conditioned and therefore we can use air-conditioning. Air handling (present in J108) is also safe following the guidance.
How well ventilated are classrooms and social areas?
All staff will ensure windows and where appropriate doors are left open when rooms are in use to ensure good circulation of air. We are using CO ₂ monitors provided by the government to regularly check the quality of air in classrooms and social areas.

If students feel unwell or are in contact with a positive case

What will the college do if a member of the community exhibits symptoms of or tests positive for COVID-19?
We will follow the latest government guidance in this situation - engaging with the Department for Education reporting process where appropriate, managing confirmed cases of coronavirus amongst our community and containing any transmission to others by following local health protection team advice. Tracing of close contacts is now handled by NHS Test and Trace. Learners, staff and other adults must not come onto the site if they have COVID-19 symptoms or have tested positive in the last 10 days. Anyone developing those symptoms during the day will be sent home (avoiding public transport) and advised to follow guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection , which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a PCR test to see if they have COVID-19.
What do I do if I am in 'close contact' with a positive case?
All close contacts will be informed as soon as possible. Students and staff who are in close contact with positive cases, whether onsite, offsite or within the household, will only need to self-isolate if they are over 18 years 6 months old and are not fully vaccinated or if they develop symptoms. The latest government guidance about self-isolation is here . Most students will be under 18 years 6 months old and will no longer need to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms. All close contacts are encouraged to get a PCR test if they are contacted by the college. Add in guidance link

Testing at college and at home

How will mass testing and home testing work?
We offered all students two on-site lateral flow test in September, the first of which will be before lessons begin. Students and staff should continue to test twice weekly at home. Information about testing has been communicated directly to students via email and SharePoint.

Transport

What should students and staff do on public transport to minimise risk?

Face coverings may still be expected on different types of public transport and personal responsibility should be exercised at all times.

How will the College Bus operate?

There are no longer any particular safety requirements on the College Bus, however we would encourage the use of face masks.

What are you doing to promote walking and cycling to college?

Walking or cycling to college reduces pressure on public transport and is better for the environment and student and staff health. We already have a sizeable bike park for students and for staff operate the Cycle to Work scheme. As part of our Green Plan, we will be working with students to promote an environmentally friendly approach to commuting. Through our tutorial programme and with the support of the Richard Collyer Union (RCU) we will regularly update students to raise awareness.

Health conditions, specific needs and attendance

Do students or staff with underlying health conditions need to attend college?

Students and staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable can attend college. This includes students and staff who live in households with people who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

What will you do for students or staff that are very anxious about being on site or have been negatively affected in terms of their wellbeing by the lockdown?

This is a perfectly understandable concern, and our staff are ready to support students and their colleagues as best they can. We have outstanding wellbeing support for students on site and can refer externally as well where needed. Staff should raise their worries with their line manager or HR and where needed extra support can be provided.

What are you doing to protect staff who may be at a comparatively increased risk from coronavirus?

Some staff with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus. If staff have particular concerns, they should raise these with their line manager or HR in the first instance. We will discuss these concerns and explain the measures we are putting in place, considering each situation on a case-by-case basis. People who live with those who have comparatively increased risk from coronavirus can attend the workplace.

What support is in place for young people with SEND and / or Education Health and Care (EHC) plans?

Our college support for students with SEND is outstanding and tailored to each individual student need. Staff consider needs on a case-by-case basis in discussion with the student and relevant staff.

COVID-19 vaccination

How can I get vaccinated?

COVID-19 vaccination is now being offered to our students at local sites run by GPs or community pharmacies, at larger vaccination centres and in some hospitals. More information on how to get a vaccine can be found on the [NHS website](#) and [government guidance](#) is here.

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