

14th September 2020

Dear students, parents and carers,

I am writing to update you on our processes for ensuring the College remains Covid-19 safe and to outline how we are applying these steps to minimise the risk of cases and transmission.

We are a large sixth form college and in planning for being fully open for the start of term we took the important decision to organise student logistics based on their curriculum choice. This effectively created curriculum class bubbles during any specific day/visit that separate students and minimises the extent of unnecessary informal student contact. In addition, we are also taking a careful approach to consistent seating plans in every lesson and this ensures that the number of students who are in prolonged close proximity during a lesson is kept to a minimum and that all such contacts are known and recorded. Therefore, the College has scope to contain or isolate any COVID-19 risks at a very local level internally, not just through a class bubble, but potentially also to specific students located in specific areas of our classrooms.

I want to let you know that during our first week we had to apply these procedures in two separate isolated instances. These were as a result of a student, who was asymptomatic whilst on site, subsequently reporting a positive COVID-19 test result. I want to reassure you that our containment procedures were successful in identifying the very small number of potential contacts and as a result we have contacted these and asked them to self-isolate as a precautionary measure. All those identified with potential links were quickly informed and provided with appropriate guidance in line with that provided by Public Health England. The number affected was small as a result of our approach to single sessions and a formal approach to seating arrangements

In line with our robust procedures, we immediately contacted Public Health England (PHE) in order to report these instances and to externally review the actions taken. Part of this process was to establish that our response has been appropriate; PHE confirmed that this is the case. This has meant that the College and all other classes have been unaffected and continue to be able to operate as normal. As part of these procedures our cleaning and estates teams have carried out appropriate deep cleaning of the relevant classroom and desk spaces.

Whilst PHE has confirmed it is happy with the steps the College is taking and the robustness of our response we continue to be vigilant and to place a very high priority on cleaning and promoting hygiene across the whole College. This approach continues to keep all activities on site as safe as possible.

I would like to stress that this is a reminder that it is more important than ever that we all strictly adhere to the measures put in place when at college and the three particular priorities as follows:

- Maintain your social distance
- Wash your hands regularly and or use the sanitisers at every classroom base
- Wear a face covering at all times except when you are settled in a classroom.

The College has set up a COVID-19 free phone number 0800 2461777 which students must use to let us know if they can't come to college for a reason related to COVID-19, or if uncertain at all about whether to attend.

Students should not come to college if they:

- have any COVID-19 symptoms
- live in a household where someone has had symptoms within the last 14 days.
- live with or have been in contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- have travelled overseas to an area requiring a period of quarantine on return

I want to take this opportunity to reassure you that the safety of the College community is our top priority and the College has and will continue to take the steps necessary to reduce the risk of Covid-19 on campus.

We are also aware of a number of schools and colleges regionally who are operating with wider bubbles of various types that isolation of some of these bubbles have resulted. As we enter this 'new normal', we don't anticipate writing on every occasion about one off and isolated cases and will now limit communication about confirmed COVID-19 cases to just the people in affected class bubbles. I am sharing this initially to help our stakeholders understand how we are managing such circumstances on the occasions when we need to respond. We will of course continue to communicate any changes to official advice, guidance or procedures as appropriate and are grateful for the actions and precautions you too are undoubtedly taking to minimise and limit cases and transmission risks.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for their continued support and the many messages of encouragement as we continue to support students to engage positively and safely in their education once again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Wilson'.

Paul Wilson
Principal