



16 April 2020

Dear families

I hope you are all keeping safe and well.

I am writing to outline some of the planning we are now carrying out in preparation for the new term starting on 22 April. Based on current Government guidance, the 12-week period for self-isolating households concludes on the 13 June. At this time there is no further guidance on this period being extended, however this could be subject to change.

We continue to follow Government guidance on isolation for residential specialist colleges, working jointly with local authorities and taking into account your views in assessing the individual needs of students. Government guidance asks that we remain open for vulnerable children and those of key workers, however they go on to state that for the majority of children, they are safest at home during this time. We recognise that by the nature of our students' needs they are all vulnerable to some extent, on that basis as long as we have the appropriate staffing, equipment and environment we remain open, with students of key workers taking priority. As a family it is your decision if you would like your child to return to College during the self-isolating household period, for you to do that we recognise it is important for us to give you clear information to base your decision on.

College will not be the usual experience for students. We have made adjustments to ensure students are as safe as possible, following Public Health England and Government advice. Unfortunately, this will mean some level of restriction, for some students this might mean that they and their family decide it is not right for them to return to College during this time. For others being at College, even with some level of restrictions is right for them. We fully understand and support that students and their families will need to make decisions based on their own personal circumstances.

I appreciate there is a significant amount of information in this letter, some of which could cause worry and anxiety. It is important that we are as informative as possible to allow students and their families to make an informed decision. I have included a 'frequently asked questions' section at the end of this letter.

In the meantime, we will continue to use the home learning and make regular contact with students to check on their wellbeing. We are exploring opportunities to delivery live sessions with students and will update you with further information.

Please can I ask that if you are a key worker and are planning for your child to return to College on the 22 April that you confirm this with us. Equally, if you feel that your child should return to College, please inform us by contacting helen.beer@ffc.ac.uk, this will allow time for us to prepare appropriately.

Best wishes



Dr Tina Pagett
CEO/Principal



Frequently Asked Questions

If my child has symptoms of COVID-19 or been in contact in the last 14-days with someone who has symptoms can then return to College?

No, if they have symptoms, they must not return for 7-days or until symptom free. If they have been in contact with someone with symptoms, they must not return for 14-days and can only do so if they have remained symptom free. Symptoms include a cough or temperature of 37.8 or above.

Will the residential houses still be under self-isolating household restrictions?

Yes, self-isolating restrictions will need to be in place.

Will my child's timetable change?

Yes, the curriculum will be adapted to ensure social distancing and safety. There will be a continued emphasis on learning, however the main timetable will not be in place.

Will transport services be operational?

You will need to liaise with transport services to check on availability of routine services.

Are there enough staff to support my child if they go back to College?

We are working very hard to ensure we deploy staff safely and effectively. At times we will have staff absent from work due to self-isolation, shielding or other non COVID-19 related sickness. Managers will work together with staff to ensure safe staffing levels.

What happens if my child becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms at College?

We would ask you to remain at home and self-isolate for a period of 14-days or until symptom free.

If they are residential and you would like them to return home, this can be arranged. However, if you prefer or it is safer to remain at College then staff are skilled to take care of them. Barrier nursing would be implemented which will mean they are unable to leave their room for at least 7-days, maybe 14 depending on others in the residence also having symptoms.

Public Health England have requested that any student that shows COVID-19 symptoms while at College is tested (residential only). This is something we would discuss with parents, GP and the student at the time to ensure we are following the appropriate course of action for the individual.

Would my son or daughter be at higher risk of catching COVID-19 at College than at home?

Government guidance is to minimise contact with as many people as possible and remain at home if it is safe and reasonable to do so. When at College students naturally come into contact with more people, their peers and staff. In itself, increasing the number of people you come in to contact can increase your risk of COVID-19.



Do the staff have access to sufficient PPE?

The College has commissioned deep cleaning of the College and housing during the Easter break. We have a full stock of antibacterial soap and sanitiser. Since the government guidance on social distancing was released, we have systems in place across all settings.

We have been issued with the appropriate PPE to enable us to follow the guide for barrier nursing with clear instructions on how and when to implement the use of PPE, namely when a resident shows symptom of COVID-19. Infection control and PPE guidance varies from the different sources, PHE, NICE and DfE. We will ensure that we interpret this guidance and implement the most effective use of the equipment we have sourced, keeping all students and staff safe to the best of our ability.

Can residential students go home for weekends and can my family visit?

If students return to College, we expect them to remain in College until the next half-term holiday which is on 23 May. Students will not be allowed to come and go or leave their location for day trips during this time.

Family will not be allowed to visit in between returning to College and leaving for half-term, unless it is to collect their child for the remainder of the half term. However, we will ensure plenty of contact in whatever means suits the student and family. We know how hard the restricted contact will be for families but these steps are necessary if we are to manage the risks of infection.

If my child can't return to College this term can we apply for an extension request?

At the present time we do not fully understand the implications for students that have lost time at College or not achieved their learning outcomes due to the interruption of their education. We are working closely with all local authorities to gain clarification regarding extension requests. Once we have further information, we will share this with you.