

Dear families,

Following the Government's announcement on the [COVID-19 recovery strategy](#) and [roadmap](#) published yesterday, we thought it would be useful to update you on the advice for schools and colleges and also highlight a document specifically for families [information to parents and carers](#).

## Government Strategy

I'm sure you are aware that there has been a shift in emphasis towards more children and young people getting back into face-to-face learning "we are encouraging all eligible children to attend...it is no longer necessary for parents of eligible children to keep them at home". As such, we have attached a publication specifically for parents and carers with details on schools, colleges and other education settings for your information.

## What does this mean for Fairfield Farm College?

The guidance yesterday, as expected, points towards a phased return to face to face learning from 1 June, beginning with priority year groups in mainstream primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges. For specialist colleges like Fairfield, the guidance states that we "**should work towards a phased return of more young people... and welcome back as many young people as can be safely catered for in their setting**".

In line with Government guidance, Fairfield has remained open, both to students and residents. As a result, we have been operating different ways of working, in line with guidance, for many weeks. We have prioritised children of key workers and worked with families to identify students that would benefit from remaining in college. We are seeing a phased increase in students returning to college and continue to work with you to make plans that best meet the needs of your child.

In brief, the Government are advising that:

- Now that we have made progress in reducing the transmission of coronavirus we are encouraging all eligible children to attend school/college
- Our ambition is to bring children back to school/college before the summer holidays, for a month if feasible
- Special post-16 institutions will work towards a phased return of young people without a focus on specific year groups
- Vulnerable children of all year groups continue to be expected and encouraged to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so
- Children and young people are strongly encouraged to attend (**where there are no shielding concerns**), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending
- Children, young people and staff who have been classed as [clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions](#) have been advised to shield.
- A child/young person or a member of staff who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend their education or childcare setting
- Staff and children in all settings will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their households. A negative test will enable everyone to return to education/work

To be clear, we are sharing this advice with you and will continue to work with you to ensure that we are meeting the needs of your child. **We are not informing you that you must send your child back to college on the 1 June and fully intend to continue to operate home learning for those students that continue to isolate.**

## **Practical arrangements**

We continue to take advice on H&S measures in college and houses to ensure the safety of our young people. Issues around PPE will continue to be debated, as the guidance states that additional PPE and facemasks are not required in education except for purposes of personal care or working with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus. We have a good supply of all recommended PPE.

Public Health England are clear that if education settings apply comprehensive infection control measures such as taking steps to ensure symptomatic individuals do not attend settings, regular hand cleaning, respiratory hygiene and cleaning measures, then the risk of transmission will be lowered. Measures we are taking include:

- Guidance issued to ensure people are alert to the symptoms and follow the government guidance on isolation
- Deep cleaning of all areas including increasing the capacity by contracting with a local cleaning company who are onsite daily, increase quality assurance measures
- Anti-bacterial soap and sanitizer in all key areas
- Strict handwashing and hygiene guidance
- Reduced numbers of staff working on site and with students through weekly rotas
- Reduced numbers of residents and students (this is increasing using the recommended phased approach)
- Adapted timetable focusing on education outdoors
- Minimising the use of corridors by using outside access to classrooms
- Using the large vehicles to space students when travelling to HNC
- Visible spacing measures to support 2m distancing
- Full PPE including gloves and aprons available
- Introducing face coverings for those that feel more comfortable wearing them

We have 11 students on site today and are currently expecting 15 next week. We anticipate a gradual increase in numbers after half-term but we know that some families, particularly those that are shielding, are not planning on returning this term. If you would like to discuss plans for your child to return to college then please contact Helen on [helen.beer@ffc.ac.uk](mailto:helen.beer@ffc.ac.uk) or 01373866066.

Finally, it has been lovely to see students taking part in Zoom tutorials. Please let us know if you have any problems with accessing home learning and Zoom sessions or if you need access to a computer or iPad.

Keep safe and well.

**Dr. Tina Pagett**

**Principal**