



Temporary Timetable and New Arrangements

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

I'm sorry for the length of this email but I would like to explain why the College has adopted an emergency timetable starting after half-term, and to outline what you can do to help keep College as safe as possible.

As you know I am determined to do everything possible to provide a full education to our students. During lockdown we supported students so that they were able to learn effectively from home. However, I know that students do best when they have direct contact with their teachers and classmates and that learning from home is never the same as learning at College. Since the College reopened, we have been committed to providing students not only with a full programme of lessons but also with the majority of their additional activities such as enrichment, careers guidance and pastoral sessions. I have been delighted with how well they have responded in establishing positive working relationships with their teachers, developing good study habits and enjoying their time at College. I remain deeply committed to maintaining as full an education as is safe in these challenging times.

It was therefore difficult for me to take the decision to implement a 'circuit break' which meant that students were not in College last week and teachers supported them in learning remotely. My decision was based on concerns I had about the high number of students and staff who were having to isolate as a result of a relatively small number of confirmed cases. Although the local health protection team provided reassurance in relation to our risk assessment and protocols I was concerned that the staff members who were having to isolate were concentrated in a number of key support staff areas, leaving me uncertain that the College could operate safely and effectively.

There were also some positive reasons for the decision to close last week. It

gave our Senior Leadership Team an opportunity to review our risk assessments and to identify additional measures that we believe will result in fewer students and staff having to isolate when there are confirmed cases in future. We were also able to test our arrangements for remote learning and to identify the extent to which staff and students are currently able to use this effectively. Overall I think it was the right decision, and I am grateful for the many supportive messages from parents to this effect.

Looking ahead however I have to tell you that I have been reminded that the 'Government's policy is that education settings remain open in all alert levels'. This expectation applies even in the event of our local community experiencing higher infection rates and they would not expect me to 'substantially restrict on site attendance' 'other than in exceptional circumstances such as when restrictions are in place to contain local outbreaks'. It goes without saying that the wellbeing of staff, students and the wider community will remain my priority in any future decisions I have to make.

New Arrangements

The key challenge in keeping the College safe while providing a full education is that in every circumstance people must either be a safe distance apart (1m+, or if for 15 minutes or more 2m) or we must be able to identify and trace potential contacts whenever they can't be distanced. This is straightforward when students are in class as we can refer to seating plans when we need to identify those who need to isolate due to their proximity to someone who tests positive. Where it can be difficult is when students are using social areas such as the Cafeteria, particularly on days affected by poor weather when students can't take advantage of the relative safety provided by being outside.

In order to try to further reduce potential infections as well as to ensure we can be fully confident in tracing proximity contacts should someone test positive I have decided that we need to take measures to reduce the number of students who are in College at any one time without a lesson. To this end and starting immediately on our return after half-term (Tuesday 3rd November) we will adopt an emergency timetable with fewer, longer lessons on each day. By concentrating lessons in this way it means that students will be required to be in College for less time overall whilst ensuring that there is no reduction in the teaching time for each student in every academic subject.

In addition to this we have rearranged seating in the Cafeteria and Hall so that we can be sure of maintaining a 2 metre distance at all times. Even though we have identified some additional workspaces for students around College these changes will reduce overall capacity and so to prevent overcrowding students who are in lessons will not have a break (although they will be given some 'down time' during the lesson) and they will also be required to eat their lunch in their classroom. We will ensure that everyone is able to get access to the Cafeteria at an allocated time or, if they prefer, students are welcome to bring and eat a packed lunch in the classroom. Other arrangements will be made in subjects such as science where it is not appropriate to eat in the labs. The College's common and student work areas, including the LRC, Hall and Cafeteria, will be reserved for those students who have to be in College but don't have a lesson at that time.

It is clear that these arrangements will present students and staff with significant challenges and I would not introduce it unless I thought it necessary to keep the College as safe as possible and to prevent large numbers of students having to be isolated in the event of positive cases in the future. Consequently, the change to the timetable is a temporary measure and we will review it with the aim of returning to our normal timetable as soon as possible. The emergency timetable to take effect from 3rd November can be seen below, and students should be able to see their individual timetable via the College Portal before they return next week.

	8.50-11.10am	11.15-1.55pm		2.00-4.10pm	
Monday		11.15-1.25pm	Lunch	Time available for workshop or remote support	Time available for online workshop or remote support
Tuesday					
Wednesday		11.15-1.25pm	Lunch	Time available for workshop or remote support	Time available for online workshop or remote support
Thursday					
Friday		11.15-1.25pm	Lunch	Time available for workshop or remote support	Time available for online workshop or remote support

Finally, I would like to ask for the help of students and parents in keeping College as safe as possible and to thank you in advance for your continued support.

Best wishes

Ed Senior

How can our students help?

- Do not come into College if you, or a member of your household, develops COVID symptoms. Please contact us in such instances.
- Adhere to any instruction to isolate as part of test and trace measures.
- Do not come into College if you don't have a lesson. Try to work from home whenever this is possible.
- Always follow instructions from staff in relation to use of the Cafeteria, Hall and other areas of College.
- If you have a 'free' lesson make sure you have some work you can do if you need to use the common areas in College.
- If you want to spend time socialising with your friends please do so outside.
- Wherever possible maintain physical distancing in College and do not rearrange furniture or other measures put in place to promote distancing.
- Follow government guidelines outside of College including maintaining physical distancing wherever possible.
- Continue to wear a mask in corridors and communal areas.
- Maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene

How can parents help?

- Please reinforce the key messages above
- Encourage your son or daughter to walk, cycle or drive to College wherever possible. Please ensure that they are not travelling in a car with someone who is not a member of their household. If you give them a lift to and from College consider whether you can change your routines so that they can work from home more often.

- Consider providing them with a packed lunch wherever possible.

Other things to note

- Please note that the Cafeteria will be offering a more limited grab and go service. We will continue to cater for students who are eligible for subsidised meals.
- College transport will arrive and depart at the usual times.
- Our November mock examinations are scheduled to go ahead as planned for our second year students.