



HAILSHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMY TRUST

'Be the very best you can be'

6 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am pleased to be writing to you today to report that we have had a successful first week back, with students settling down quickly and responding well to being back in college. I fully understand that last Saturday's government announcement around lockdown will have for many people increased levels of anxiety and concern around the pandemic. It is therefore, more important now than ever that as a community we are all doing our best to support one another through this situation.

Late on Wednesday afternoon the government provided the latest updated guidance for schools in relation to the new lockdown and I wanted to write to you today to let you know what the impact of this is for us at HCC.

The government have made it clear in the guidance that it is very important for children and young people to attend their schools for their well-being and development and I am sure this is something we all support and agree with. Therefore, school attendance continues to be mandatory during the current lockdown. If any parents/carers have any concerns or are anxious about school attendance, please do contact us at the college.

There is very little in the guidance that we have not already been doing for some time, which is pleasing both in the knowledge that new, unfamiliar and potentially unsettling measures are not necessary but also that we are already employing the latest control measures. There are, however, things that we are able to improve upon and I will set these out below.

Face Coverings

The updated government guidance for schools states that:

In schools where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings and we expect adults and pupils to be sensitive to those needs.

As you know, we felt this was a necessary control measure early in Term 1, so our students are already used to bringing a face covering each day and wearing it in all corridors and communal areas. We will continue to remind students of the requirements and where necessary, issue sanctions to ensure that students appreciate the importance of complying with this expectation for everyone's safety.

Transport

The updated government guidance for schools states that:

Children and young people aged 11 and over must wear a face covering on public transport.

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Staff, children and their parents and carers are encouraged to walk or cycle when travelling to and from school where this is possible, and to plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport. This will allow social distancing to be practised.

The overwhelming majority of our students already walk to college and since we returned in September, we have aided social distancing through the introduction of dedicated entry/exit points for year group bubbles.

We would however, like to stress to students and families that friends should not gather in groups outside the school gates either at the start of the day or particularly as students leave the site at the end of the day. We do require students to leave the site and begin their walk home straight away and senior staff will, as usual, be on the gates to disperse any small groups as necessary.

Coats

Now that the heating is on throughout college building and classrooms, we will be asking students to remove their coats in classrooms as they always would have done. During lessons, windows will be kept ajar (not wide open) to aid ventilation so rooms should not feel too cold. If a room is exceptionally cold a teacher will use their judgement on this but otherwise learners need to be wearing their normal uniform including blazers or full PE kit and a black jumper.

Visitors to the College

Please can I remind you that we are only able to welcome parents and carers onto the college site if you have a prior appointment. On arrival, please wait outside the Reception area until called, wear a face covering and follow our social distancing measures.

We ask that you help your child to pack their bags with all items they will need, for example, lunch, face mask, etc., before leaving home each morning. In order to reduce the risk of transmission, our staff will no longer be able to pass on forgotten items throughout the day.

Support across our community

It is really important for me to highlight to you just how hard college staff are working to support our students. Whilst students are very much remaining in one section of the college within their year group bubbles, staff are moving from lesson to lesson across the entire college site and this in itself creates additional pressure on staff to be able to get to each lesson as promptly as possible. We are all very understanding of the impact the pandemic and new lockdown has on our learners and we will continue to do our utmost to support them, however, we also need our learners to play their part. Now, more than ever, and as is normally the case, students need to be mature, responsible and cooperative at all times.

It will be more likely than normal that over the coming weeks and months there will be times when students may not be taught by their usual teacher and that a 'substitute' teacher may be required. We will, of course always aim to keep this to an absolute minimum but as always, we expect students to be fully attentive and respectful towards any member of staff, whoever they may be.

All of us – learners, parents and staff alike – are living in times that are anything but 'normal' and certainly some of us will be finding things very difficult and challenging. I am always very proud of the strength of our community and this is a time more than any other for us all to pull together and support one another so we can make the next few weeks and months as positive and successful as possible.

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Non-uniform Day

We are holding a non-uniform day in aid of Children In Need on Friday 13 November. Students may wear their own clothes in return for a 50p donation.

Inset Day

We have an Inset Day scheduled for Friday 20 November. The college will therefore, be closed to all students on that day.

As always, I would like to sincerely thank everybody for your ongoing support. If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01323 841468 or email hcc@hccat.net

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Matthews', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phil Matthews
Executive Principal