

Dear Parents and carers

Welcome to a new term! I very much hope your child has had a good week and is enjoying getting back into their lessons. We are certainly very happy to have all our students back. The college day does look very different now and most students are acclimatising well to this. Our new Year 7 students are starting to find their way around and have made a really positive start.

Now we are a week into term, I need to let you know which aspects of reopening the college I still need your help with, and also to give you a few updates.

Uniform and equipment

Firstly I want to thank you for all of your support in ensuring students arriving for school in the correct uniform and with all their equipment. The vast majority of students have arrived absolutely ready to learn, and this makes a big difference to the smooth running of the college so 'thank you'. If your child does not have the correct uniform or equipment and you are unable to source this yourself, please contact your child's Pastoral Support Manager straight away so we can rectify this and ensure your child is ready to focus on their studies.

As a reminder, every child needs:

- ▲ A pencil case
- ▲ Black pens
- ▲ A pencil
- ▲ A ruler
- ▲ A rubber
- ▲ A pencil sharpener
- ▲ A scientific calculator (available through the college at a discounted price)

Highlighters, glue, colouring pencils etc... are all helpful, too, in order to reduce the need for children to share equipment.

Water

We have had to turn off our water fountains because of the touch surfaces on them. Water is freely available in the Dining Hall at lunchtime but students should ensure they bring enough with them for the day.

End of the college day

The arrangements for keeping everyone safe are working well. Students have quickly become used to sanitising their hands regularly and moving around the one way system. The most difficult time to manage this is the end of the day, when students leave. They all have designated exit points so that they are spread out inside the building. However some students are having to be repeatedly reminded of the need for them to move quickly away from the vicinity of the college to prevent the congregation of large groups. Please can you, as parents and carers, have a chat with your child to remind him or her of the importance of a swift dispersal at the end of school?

Unnecessary contact

We are lucky in the South West that cases of Covid-19 have remained lower than elsewhere. However this does seem to have led to a degree of complacency in some of our students. Although students do not need to remain 2 metres apart within their bubble, we are asking them to avoid unnecessary contact and maintain a distance from their peers whenever possible. This message is not being taken seriously by too many students and some are still hugging, high-fiving and playing quite physical games. Please can all parents and carers make time this weekend to talk to their children about why following all safety guidance is important, even if it means we do not get to do all of the things we usually enjoy.

New government rules

From Monday 14 September, it will be illegal to gather in a group of more than six people. This does not apply within schools and we can continue to operate. However it will affect our students outside of college. This week I have heard students talking about meeting up with large groups of friends on the way home or in the evenings. From Monday, they will not be allowed to meet up in a group larger than six, and if they go out in a small group but bump into another group of friends, the two groups will not be permitted to socialise together. This is also even more reason why students cannot be waiting in groups outside the college at the end of the day. It is important that everyone acts within the law in this matter. The South West is not immune to this disease and young people do need to act responsibly outside school if we are to be able to keep schools open safely.

Visitors

As I have explained in previous communications, the college is unable to welcome visitors without a prior appointment at present. This is so that appropriate safety measures can be put in place and visitors can be given all the information they need about protocols before their appointment. Therefore please avoid turning up at the college without an appointment; we will be unable to accommodate you. Telephone, email and School Comms can all be used to contact us safely.

Coats

As you are aware, we have to keep the year groups separate wherever possible. This means that we have staggered breaks and lunches, with each year group having a designated area. It also means we are having to use the outside of the college more for accessing classrooms. The design of our building means that our students are used to never having to venture outdoors in the rain, however, they may now need to do so. Therefore, please send your child to school in a coat in bad weather.

Free school meals

Coronavirus and the consequent 'lock down' have had a negative impact on many people's financial circumstances. More of you may now be eligible for free school meals for your child. You can find out if you are eligible and apply by visiting this website: <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/fsm/>. If you don't have internet access, you can telephone Torbay Council's Free School Meals Team on 01803 208244. Signing up is straightforward and nothing would change in your child's routine: it just means that their payment card is topped up with money by the school every day instead of via Parent Pay. Free School Meals are worth up to £500 a year per child for and offer valuable support for many families.

I realise that this letter contains a number of requests for parents to act but it is important that we all work together to make the complexities of reopening the school safe and efficient for everyone. I very am grateful for your support.

Yours sincerely



Alex Newton
Principal