



17th July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are all well and once again a big thank you for your support during the most difficult of times. We have had around 40 students accessing College over the last 6 weeks and we are really pleased with how it has all gone in our new college environment. I apologise for the length of this letter, however, as I am sure you will agree, these are uncertain times and I thought you would appreciate greater insight into our planning and preparation. Should you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us on the **Helpline** - helpline@newfriarscollege.org.uk

*We are opening College to just our **new starter students on Thursday 3rd September and for returning learners from the week starting Monday 7th September.** This is because our new learners have not had the traditional transition visits that they would usually have before starting College.*

The Government guidance for Special Colleges is very clear but it does have implications for our setting. The government have stated that:

“Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children and young people returning to College. For the vast majority of children and young people, the benefits of being back in an education setting far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), and this guidance explains the steps settings need to take to reduce that risks still further. As a result, we can plan for all children and young people to return and start to reverse the enormous costs of missed education. This will be an important move back towards normal life for many children, young people and families.”

As a College team we will constantly monitor the guidance and we will be guided by the experts. We have been and will continue to teach our students in ‘bubbles’ or zones. Our experience has been that the students have been glad to be back in College and to have a routine. Those students back in College have been well-prepared by their parents and carers who have shown them the booklet on the website that explains what College is like. It will be important for you to also prepare your son/daughter for the September start.

It is even more important that we work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that we minimise the risk. Whilst it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment the things that you can do that will help enormously:

These are some of the measures that we all need to follow:

- 1) **avoid contact with individuals who are unwell** by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, **do not attend College**
- 2) **clean hands** thoroughly more often than usual
- 3) **ensure good respiratory hygiene** by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ in a tissue approach

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4) introduce **enhanced cleaning**, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach

5) **minimise contact** between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible

6) where necessary, **wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)**

It is essential that students and staff who are ill or have symptoms stay at home

My son/daughter's mental health and preparation for being back in College

As a staff team, we have undertaken research about how students' mental health and wellbeing might be affected. We will be following the principles of the Carpenter 'Recovery Curriculum' and prioritising:-

- **Care**
- **Compassion**
- **Creativity**

The Government are very keen that all students make a full return to College at the beginning of term. We are prioritising care and compassion and we know that, for some of our students, this will be a struggle. We are therefore reviewing our risk assessments and will be in touch if we feel that we need to look at a more phased approach for your son/daughter. Please do get in touch if you feel that your son/daughter will find the reality of returning to College, even with you following the advice above, very stressful.

What are Zones and Bubbles?

We will have 3 Zones or bubbles operating. Staff will move between the bubbles but students will stay within their bubble in College. We will also make sure all transport is as safe as possible although students from different bubbles may need to be on the same Local Authority transport. Students will have different areas of College, different break and lunch times, different toilets and only share the resources in their zone or bubble. There will be around 50 students in each zone.

The zones are based on the pathways that the students are in so this means that they will be with their peers in classes and of a similar ability level. All teachers and other staff can operate across different pathways. Staff will try to keep their distance from students and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults. However, we recognise, as I am sure you do, that this will be a challenge in our small College and with students having differing needs. Staff will try to avoid close face to face contact and they will try to minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone.

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The Shaw Education Trust Limited is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England (no 09067175)
Registered address: Shaw Education Trust, The Lodge, Wolstanton High College, Milehouse Lane, Wolstanton, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
Staffordshire, ST5 9JU

The details of our academies registered as business names can be found at www.shaw-education.org.uk



Preparation for Adulthood

We have a very creative timetable and curriculum offer for next year which helps prepare our students to be as independent as possible. This means that we will be resuming travel training, work experience, supported internships and educational visits where safe to do so. All of our pathways use the local community and we will continue to do so but with a detailed risk assessment. We do not want to dilute any of our offer as a college, but health and safety will always be our first priority.

Attendance and student illness?

The Government have stated that all students should be returning to College, we will therefore, as directed, be tracking attendance closely. However, please ensure that if your child is symptomatic

- a high temperature – this means they feel hot to touch on the chest or back (you do not need to measure their temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed your child/or your child tells you that they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Transport?

We are communicating very closely with the LA transport teams – at the moment, we do not know what time pick-ups and departures will be – I am afraid that we will all have to be flexible next term – particularly about start and finish times. We have devised a very comprehensive system for getting students off the transport and into College, then reversing this at the end of the day. The LA transport teams have the most unenviable task of us all trying to ensure that they mitigate risk as much as possible.

We do not yet know who will be transported on what transport with whom. It will be the responsibility of the parent / carer to check the transport on arrival at your house – transport clean, escort wearing mask (your child wearing a mask if they are able to). There will be separate areas in College for disembarkation and entering the building. When taxis arrive at College, the transport team and staff will greet students and supervise removal of masks. They will then be escorted to their TA team who will supervise hand washing and support students to their classrooms.

At the end of the day, students will be supervised putting on their masks and staff will check that the vehicle is clean and escorts are wearing masks.

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Cleaning, Personal Care and Enteral Feeding?

We have extended the hours of the cleaning team and will have Personal Care team in one bubble/zone. To support with arrangements for toileting – the PC Team will wear personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks and visors, as will Emily, our Enteral Feeding Assistant.

Lunch and Break

The canteen will be open and our chef will be cooking a daily hot meal – menus to follow. If your son/daughter has a packed lunch, it needs to be brought into school in plastic bags that will get thrown away at the end of the lunch sitting. There are different lunch sittings and the 3 bubbles will not meet. Most students will have lunch in their classrooms. The timings are all approximate – we know that we will have to thoroughly clean surfaces after the first setting – if we need more time to do this, we will have to allow for that.

Break-times?

Bubbles/Zones will have separate areas to exercise and will not have the opportunity to meet others either outside or on the corridors

What happens if there is a local outbreak and my son/daughter can't come to College?

We will provide on-line learning for your son/daughter and wellbeing calls. Please can I stress once again that anybody with symptoms must not come into College.

Items brought into College?

Please keep these to a minimum – students all have their own College equipment assigned to them in College that is kept separate to everyone else's.

Parents & carers coming into College?

We will unfortunately have to keep this to a minimum in the autumn term, but please do ring us if you ever want to discuss **any** aspect of College life. We will hopefully have EHCP meetings from October onwards.

Pool?

We will monitor government guidance about the opening of the pool. This will be in very small operational groupings. We will update parents further in September.

External Therapies – Physio, Music therapy and Speech and Language?

External therapies including physio sessions will hopefully be resumed in September.

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Start dates and finish times?

Term starts for **new starters only on Thursday 3rd September**

Continuing students will start on **Monday 7th September**

The College day will remain the same as it is now (8.45am – 3.00pm).

Should you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. The holiday dates for next year (2020-2021) have been attached and are on our website.

Have a lovely and safe summer holidays

Kind Regards

Rob Millington

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