

Dear Student, Parents and Guardians,

We are really proud of the way in which our staff and students have responded throughout the past 14 months of the pandemic and welcome the latest guidance issued earlier this week.

As you will be aware, there have been changes to restrictions across England from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

One of the major changes is to relax the requirements for students to wear masks at all times. We welcome this change as we realise that wearing a mask all day can be uncomfortable for some. We do however, want to do all we can to continue to protect our college, the NHS and the wider community.

Students will no longer have to wear masks in classrooms except in specialist areas as in accordance with the latest guidance, but of course students may do so if their health needs suggest they may be more vulnerable to Covid-19 or if a teacher requests this in relation to a particular classroom task. We will however, be encouraging students to kindly continue to wear masks in all communal areas such as in the corridors, within the Learning Resource Centre and in the refectories when not eating or drinking. We have no doubt that this request will be welcomed and supported by the significant majority of our students who have demonstrated great kindness and respect for others throughout.

Staff will continue to wear face coverings when they are unable to maintain social distance from others and in all communal areas. All visitors will also be required to wear a mask at all times.

Existing Covid-safety measures will continue including: staggered starts, timetables and lunch breaks, no mixing of bubbles, one way systems, no assemblies or large indoor social gatherings, increased hand washing promoted, hand sanitiser stations throughout college, increased cleaning of surfaces, no sharing of materials or paperwork, increased staff presence when entering the building and in corridors and handouts/printed work sent electronically where possible to avoid the risk of cross contamination.

We would request that students continue to test at home twice weekly using the kits supplied by the college or if over 18 and are living in the UK, by using the link <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>. We will continue to distribute these to students and would ask you continue to report your results online to us at college using [Covidappresults@wigan-leigh.ac.uk](mailto:Covidappresults@wigan-leigh.ac.uk) and to 'NHS Test and Trace' if you are able. Regular testing is essential for fast identification of any Covid infection within our community which helps prevent an outbreak occurring locally.

Please note – students and staff should not attend college if they, or anyone in their household, has any of the following symptoms:

- A new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of smell or taste.
- If you or anyone in your household does have these symptoms please stay at home and call 119 to access a Covid test or visit the NHS website.
- If you feel generally unwell, please call the sick line on the back of your student ID card.

Additional changes to the guidance also relax restrictions around enrichment and enhancement activities. We are beginning to safely scale up our offer once more, and I do hope that our students get to really enjoy these opportunities once more.

I would like to thank you all once again for the amazing way in which you have all responded to the challenges placed upon us by the pandemic and for the supportive messages received.

Yours sincerely

Kind regards,



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