

COVID-19 Making Learning Safer

Buckinghamshire College Group

Dear Parents

A warm welcome to Bucks College Group. As a parent, I know this is an anxious time, made more difficult by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the Pandemic, this year will be different from other years and I wanted to share with you the steps we are taking to make learning safer for our students and staff.

The College is different from school in that we do not have a set Monday-Friday, 9.00-3.30pm timetable. Students attend over a period of 3-4 days, depending on their timetable and which may be a mixture of part and full days.

From September, the College will operate a blended learning approach over a two-week rotating period. This means that students will spend one week with their course group and tutors on campus in classrooms and/or workshops, and one week with their course group and tutors in virtual learning classrooms from home. This is to limit the contact with different groups of students and limit the amount of students we have on campus at one time for everyone's safety. We want all our students to have a great learning experience and be successful, so this approach makes sure our students receive all aspects of their programme they need. This is in line with current government advice.

This will reduce the numbers of students on campus by 50% each week, and therefore the numbers of students using transport, catering and College facilities and services. Your son/daughter's course group will be their **nucleus bubble** and this is who they will spend the majority of time with in the classroom or workshop. Each course group belongs to different curriculum areas, for example, Gaming and Graphic Design belong within the Art and Design Curriculum Area. Course groups will form **Curriculum Area Zones**, which are zoned physical spaces for classrooms/workshops, with zones spread out across the campuses, where possible to reduce contact with other groups of students outside of the Curriculum Area zone and will be used to stagger break times, lunches and cross college activities. The outside spaces will also be zoned so that during their time outside of learning in the classroom/workshop social distances can be maintained.

Please note it is not currently a requirement by the government to wear face coverings in educational settings unless identified in an individual risk assessment, or undertaking an activity that requires Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Timetables and Learning

When your son/daughter enrolls, they will receive an induction timetable, which they will attend according to this timetable for two days beginning the week 7th September 2020 with one further day of virtual induction activities completed at home. During induction, your son/daughter will; get to know their tutors; meet the rest of their group; understand more about the course and be shown how to access their full timetable ready for the start of teaching on 14th September. They will receive information on which weeks they will be on campus and which weeks are virtual, on-line learning with their course group and tutors.

If your son/daughter is a second year returning to the same programme, they will undertake a refresher on-line induction with their teaching timetables starting 14th September, again they will receive their timetable and information on which weeks they will be on campus and which weeks are virtual, on-line learning with their course group and tutors.

Foundation Learning, Life Skills Centre, Future Skills Centre

Students in these areas will be physically attending College each week in a zoned area with separate breaks and lunchtimes. The teaching and support team will be working with individual students and parents to support individual needs and requirements

Apprentices

If your son/daughter is an apprentice, the Apprenticeship Team will work with them and their employer concerning attendance at College and assessors will continue to support them in the workplace

Attendance

It is important that your son/daughter attend so that they do not miss any learning. Our 100% attendance requirements remain the same, whether they are attending physically or virtually, and they are expected to attend all aspects of the Study Programme: main qualification, English, maths, digital skills, tutorial, careers and progression coaching where appropriate.

Learning Safely on Campus

We would ask you to help us keep our students and our staff safe on campuses by talking to your son/daughter about taking COVID-19 personal responsibility for their safety and safety of others. We have taken a number of steps for their safety including:

- 2m distance markings on entrance and around the building
- One-way or Give-way systems
- Hand sanitiser stations
- Perspex screening
- Classrooms arranged in rows for side to side or behind others to avoid face-to-face contact
- Staggered starts, finishes, breaks, lunches
- Revised Housekeeping and cleaning arrangements

The College has undertaken an assessment of the risks concerning COVID-19 and put in measures to reduce the risk of infection transmission.

Your son/daughter can help keep themselves and others safe by following the COVID-19 College rules, paying attention to hygiene and regular handwashing and wiping down their desks, workspaces and equipment after use. Due to the seriousness of the consequences, we have a zero tolerance to anyone not behaving in a COVID-19 safe way and they may be asked to leave the College campus.

Public Transport

Where possible we would encourage your son/daughter to walk or cycle to College. Where this is not possible and they are required to take public transport, we would advise that you should follow the government's guidance for travelling safely.

For students who use the College minibus transport (Amersham) we will continue to offer a normal service. Your son/daughter must follow these safety measures if they are using this service:

- Sanitising hands before entering the minibus
- Wear a face covering
- Provide contact details to the driver
- Pre-pay for tickets
- Travel side-side or behind others to avoid face to face
- Where possible leave space between seating
- Avoid shouting, singing or loud talking

Catering Facilities

The College catering facilities will be open as usual but will offer a cold food (sandwiches etc) and drinks service. Students may choose to bring their own packed lunch. If your son/daughter is in receipt of free school meals, please talk to our Student Services department, so that we can continue to provide this service for you.

Communal and Social Spaces including Outdoor Spaces

All students are expected to maintain social distancing in common and social spaces including outdoors. All students are expected to remain within their zoned areas in the outdoor spaces

COVID-19 Symptoms

If your son/daughter is showing signs of COVID-19 (temperature, new cough, and loss of smell or taste), they must not attend College and their tutor must be informed immediately. This is so we can track and trace others that they may have been in contact with at College. Student Services will provide you with information on testing. Your son/daughter must self-isolate for 10 days unless the result comes back negative. If someone in your household is showing symptoms or has a positive test result, they must not attend College, they must inform their tutor and self-isolate for 14 days. We will ensure that they are able to continue learning remotely

Support with Resources and Technology

If you require support with access to resources, technology, learning or you have any other concerns at all about your son/daughter attending College; please contact their tutor or our Student Services Department who will be very happy to help.

I hope this information on COVID-19 Safer Learning is helpful and if you have any questions, please do talk to their tutor or the Curriculum Manager for the subject area.

I wish your son/daughter every success for this year and look forward to working with you in partnership.

Best wishes

Karen Mitchell

Principal/CEO

Buckinghamshire College Group