

23 December 2020

Dear Student,

I am writing to give an update regarding college opening for the new term. We expect the majority of students both 16-18 and adult to return for face-to-face delivery from Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The one exception is for first year A-level students at both Alton and Havant campuses who will continue with online learning and returning on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> January.

This is in accordance with government guidance regarding a staggered return and prioritising students who have exams for their main programme this academic year. In a post-16 setting, you will appreciate this is the majority of students across a range of ages and levels, even if on a two-year programme of study.

With the present range of tiers in operation, can we clarify that students are presently permitted to travel from a tier 2 or 3 area to a tier 4 area for education purposes.

We continue to be working to keep HSDC as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests.' Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in college safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. Although it is not mandatory for colleges to opt into this programme, I believe we should when we can do so safely. By testing we will help to stop the virus spreading and help to keep our college open as safely as possible. I stress, the test is voluntary, and requires consent for students under 18 but I would encourage everyone to take it, when available.

We will be using the first week of term to set up and hopefully trial the testing process with an initial priority for all staff and for students who are identified as needing to self-isolate due to being in close proximity with someone who has tested positive.

To this effect, may we please request that you continue to register online with the College, even during the break, if you receive notification that you have tested positive for the virus.

I attach an instructional leaflet with some more information. The college will be in contact at the beginning of term to give more details regarding consent forms and the procedure being adopted going forward. Of course, all is subject to new announcements from the government in the coming days.

Until, then, may I take this opportunity to wish you a Happy Christmas and a more positive outlook for 2021.

Kind regards,



**Mike Gaston**  
Principal and Chief Executive