

Update to arrangements from November 30th 2021

Dear All,

I am writing to you following the government announcements over the weekend due to the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK.

There are important changes that we need to make following updated government guidance for education providers. **These will be in place at WQE from Tuesday 30th November and we are asking for your full support as we implement the guidance and keep doing all we can together to protect our college and wider community.**

Face Coverings:

Indoor communal and circulation areas including corridors, LRC, study centres, social spaces and canteen areas.

All staff and students are expected to wear face coverings, apart from those who are exempt.

Please bring a face covering (and a spare) with you. If you forget your face covering please ask as you enter the buildings and we can supply you with a disposable one. Please bring a plastic bag with you so that if you need to remove the covering or if you swap your face covering you can seal the spare one away.

Classrooms

The routine wearing of face coverings by students once you are settled in class is not part of the government guidance. However, we understand that many students and staff will want to be risk averse and keep face coverings on whilst the situation with the Omicron variant remains unclear. We are asking that all in the college community respect this and work cooperatively to ensure everyone feels comfortable on-site. This may mean that for some classes, at certain times, or for certain activities, the teacher will ask students to keep face coverings on. If this causes particular issues for you please talk them over with your teacher so that a suitable compromise can be found, such as adjusting seating positions within the room.

The mindset we are encouraging is that, if in doubt about how others around you feel, start with a face covering on and adapt once the feelings of others around you are better understood, and try to be respectful and sensitive. Remember that you should not touch the front of your face covering during use or when handling it.

Lateral Flow Testing:

We already ask all staff and students to complete a lateral flow test twice weekly. Ideally on a Sunday evening and a during Wednesday. We are strongly encouraging all staff and students to keep up with twice weekly home lateral flow testing as this will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 both at college and in the community, by alerting those who have COVID-19 but who aren't showing symptoms before the risk of transmission increases. This is an important part of keeping all the college community as well as families and others you have contact with safe. This testing is for all students and staff who **do not** have any of the

symptoms of COVID-19. **If you have any symptoms commonly associated with Covid 19 you must not come on-site**, and you should then follow the guidelines to self-isolate while booking and taking a test via the normal NHS Test and Trace services.

Home lateral flow testing kits continue to be routinely available to pick up from the College reception areas. You will be given packs of tests and an instruction leaflet to explain how to carry out the test. If you are under 18 years old, the tests should be done with adult supervision. It is important to take two tests each week, one on Sunday and one on Wednesday.

You must report the result, whether positive or negative, to the NHS Test & Trace self-report website: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>.

You **must also let the College know** your result each time you carry out a test at home; please use this [online form](#).

In light of the Omicron variant emerging in the UK, it is important to report your testing to us so that we can continue to monitor for any changing trends that may occur in college. Please support the regular testing and reporting arrangements fully until advised otherwise.

COVID-19 Vaccinations:

The College strongly encourages all students to take up the offer of a vaccination against COVID-19 and you can search here to

- [book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments online](#) for an appointment at a vaccination centre or pharmacy
- [find a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site](#) to get vaccinated without needing an appointment

If you haven't had a first dose of vaccine you can still do this and are strongly encouraged to. A second vaccine dose is now also available, the current information is that people aged 16 or over are eligible for a 2nd dose, those aged 18 or over should have their 2nd dose from 8 weeks after their 1st dose. Whilst most people aged 16 or 17 should have their 2nd dose from 12 weeks after their 1st dose.

Thank you for helping us keep the entire local and WQE College community safe. As always, your health and wellbeing are our top priority and we are here to support and advise.

Kind regards,



Paul Wilson
Principal