

9 September 2021 – Update for GC first-year students and parents/carers

Dear all,

A very warm welcome to Greenhead College.

It was great to see our new first-year students at their enrolment last week. The next two years will be really exciting ones. By choosing Greenhead College, students can be assured that we will support them to achieve the A Level results they need to reach their first-choice destination, whether that is higher education, employment or apprenticeship.

We approach the new academic year with excitement and optimism, though also with some caution. We hope that the year ahead will see minimum disruption to students' education. We will continue to do all we can to mitigate against the spread of COVID-19 but do need to be realistic about a possible upturn in transmission on the return of schools and colleges.

With this in mind, can I ask that students and parents/carers read the contents of this message carefully, as it sets out the measures we have put in place to keep all students and staff safe in College. We are very mindful of the amount of classroom time students will have missed last year. We hope that with continued lateral flow testing, good hand hygiene and ventilation, and the COVID-19 vaccine, we will be able to keep all students in College.

Wellbeing

Student wellbeing is at the core of everything we do at Greenhead. Students are allocated a Personal Tutor, all of whom are pastorally experienced, mental health first-aid trained, and have extensive knowledge of support available. Our tutorial lessons include many aspects of wellbeing and cover strategies to develop resilience and good emotional health.

All students can make an appointment to see one of our dedicated College counsellors and we have a wellbeing tab on the Moodle homepage through which students can access an array of external support agencies. We will also be running Moodmasters courses in College which aim to equip our students with very practical strategies to manage stress.

The enrichment programme offers many wellbeing activities, from mindful mark making and meditation to music and sports. Additionally, our upcoming Mental and Physical Wellbeing weeks will present an opportunity to reflect and develop new skills in looking after ourselves.

Our dedicated safeguarding team are on hand for any student with safety or wellbeing concerns and can be contacted initially via email at safeguarding@greenhead.ac.uk. Alternatively, a duty safeguarder can be called by talking to the Front Office staff.

We understand that many students have been through an unsettling, and for some, very distressing time, since March 2020. It may take some time to settle and we are here to listen and support as we adapt together as a College community.

COVID-19 guidance

The following points are intended to summarise the main COVID-19 guidance for **students**:

i) Attendance

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms or have a positive test result, you should follow public health advice on when to **self isolate**. Most importantly, you must not come into College if you have tested positive, have **symptoms** or have been informed by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate.

If testing positive, students should also email absences@greenhead.ac.uk.

ii) Tracing close contacts and self-isolation

In line with the latest guidance, we will not be undertaking contact tracing in College. Instead, close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace.

You are not required to self-isolate if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, if any of the following apply:

- You are fully vaccinated;
- You are below the age of 18 years 6 months;
- You have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial;
- You are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

NHS Test and Trace will let you know if you have been identified as a close contact with a positive case and advise you to take a PCR test. We strongly encourage everyone to take a PCR test if advised to do so. There is no requirement to self-isolate while awaiting the PCR test result, so you can attend College as normal.

iii) Face coverings

Face coverings are currently not mandatory for students and staff, either in classrooms or in communal areas. Although the government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law, it recommends they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where an individual may come into contact with people they do not normally meet.

As a College, we want to keep all our students and staff as safe as possible and would **strongly recommend** the continued use of face coverings, both moving around College and in classrooms. No student will be denied education on the grounds of whether they are, or are not, wearing a face covering. However, in order to minimise risks as far as possible, you may be asked to wear a face covering when conducting practical experiments in science subjects.

If we have an outbreak in College, the Local Authority may advise us that face coverings should temporarily be worn in communal areas and/or classrooms by students and staff, unless exempt. Therefore, I will update you on this as the term progresses.

iv) One-way system

The College's one-way system will not be in operation when term starts. However, we have decided to keep our signage in place in case we have to use this to manage the number of cases of COVID-19 in College in the future.

v) Hand and respiratory hygiene

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important. You should continue to ensure that you clean your hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser. We will ensure that our hand sanitiser dispensers are regularly topped-up in College.

vi) Ventilation

We will continue to ensure that the College site is well-ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

I will explain any further adjustments we may need to make to the site in order to manage cases of COVID-19 as the term progresses. In the event of an increase in the number of positive cases reported, we will seek additional public health advice from the Department for Education and/or the Local Authority.

vii) Testing

Further education providers are expected to offer all students two on-site lateral flow device tests, three-to-five days apart, in the autumn term. Students and staff should then continue to test twice-weekly at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed by the Department for Education.

Details regarding this process, which remains voluntary, can be found in the letter I sent to students and parents/carers on Monday, 16 August. The [consent form](#) can be found via this link.

If you receive a positive LFD test result, you will need to self-isolate in line with the [stay-at-home guidance](#). You will also need to get a [free PCR test to check if you have COVID-19](#). Whilst awaiting the PCR result, you should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within two days of the positive LFD test and is negative, it overrides the LFD test result and you can return to College, as long as you don't have COVID-19 symptoms.

Those with a negative LFD test result can continue to attend College.

viii) Vaccination

Finally, can I remind students and parents/carers that a pop-up vaccination clinic will be running in College on **Friday, 10 September** between **11.00 am and 3.00 pm** on the top-floor of Rostron building.

No appointment is necessary – students can just walk in providing they are not in a lesson. Students should discuss having the vaccine with their parents/carers beforehand.

At the time of writing, NHS England hasn't stated its intention to offer second doses for 16-17-year-olds. Second vaccination doses will be available eight weeks after the first dose for students who are eligible – this is currently students who are over the age of 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ years.

To conclude, I am very much looking forward to seeing all our new students again soon. I should like to wish students all the very best for the coming two years and hope they enjoy their time as part of the Greenhead community.

Best wishes,

Simon Lett
Principal