

10 December 2021 – Update for GC students and parents/carers

Dear all,

I hope you are all well.

As you'll be aware, on Wednesday the Prime Minister implemented [Plan B of the COVID-19 Autumn and Winter Plan](#), and I should like to start this week's message with some updates concerning this.

COVID-19 updates

Attendance

The College will continue to open and operate as normal. At the present time, Plan B does not involve any changes to our current way of working.

Face coverings

Face coverings should be worn by *all* staff, students and visitors to the College in communal areas, unless exempt. Staff and students should also wear a face covering on public transport to and from College. Can I also recommend that a reusable face covering is worn rather than a disposable one.

Testing

The Department for Education guidelines currently state that sixth form students should take one LFD test at home either the evening or morning before they return to College in January. They should then continue to test in line with government guidelines. (Please note that the first day back for students after the break will be Wednesday, 5 January 2022.)

Students may pick up additional test kits from the main entrance (near the visitors' seating area) from Monday.

Isolation

All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will continue to be required to self-isolate and asked to book a PCR test.

The Government plans to introduce daily contact testing as soon as possible, as an alternative to self-isolation, for contacts of positive Omicron cases who are fully vaccinated or under the age of 18-years-and-6-months.

Vaccination

A walk-in COVID-19 vaccine clinic will be operating at Huddersfield Bus Station on Sunday, 12 December, 10.30 am – 2.30 pm. First, second and booster jabs (Pfizer) are on offer to those aged 12+ years.

Exams (A2 students)

Next Summer's exams are still scheduled to go ahead as planned.

As students and parents-carers will be aware, the Department for Education and Ofqual jointly consulted earlier in the term on [proposed contingency arrangements for awarding Teacher Assessed Grades \(TAGs\) in 2022](#), in the event that exams are not able to go ahead next Summer.

The College has already developed its own contingency arrangements should exams be unable to run and will share details of these plans early in the New Year.

Latest COVID-19 figures

Week ending 10 December 2021	Total
Number of students with confirmed COVID-19	23
Number of students self-isolating	30
Number of staff with confirmed COVID-19	3
Number of staff self-isolating	0

Greenhead College ranked as the best state Sixth Form College in the north of England

In other news this week, The Sunday Times released their 29th edition of the Parent Power Schools Guide, ranking Greenhead College as the 10th best among all state-funded Sixth Form Colleges in the UK, and the highest-ranked Sixth Form College in the north of England.

The rankings are based on exam results data from 2017-2019, due to the impact the pandemic had on how grades were derived in 2020 and 2021.

Greenhead College was the only northern college to make the top 10, with only 27 of the top 75 colleges being from the north.

Read the full Sunday Times article [here](#).

Student voice

This item concerns feedback from students on a number of issues.

At the last GCSA (Greenhead College Student Association) meeting on 18 November, a number of points were raised by Tutor reps. The senior team at the College has reviewed this feedback and also the findings of the recent A1 and A2 student survey which elicited 1416 responses.

A summary of the College's response to the points raised can be found in an appendix at the end of this message (pages 4-7).

Yorkshire Climate Change Commission

At its meeting on Wednesday, the Commission released a short animation, which summarises its Climate Action Plan. This suggests how Yorkshire and the Humber can reach its regional targets for net zero and climate resilience. The video can be found [here](#). More about the climate action plan, including translations of the executive summary into different languages, can be found [here](#).

Update on College events

A2 reunion

As you'll be aware, we have had to cancel this event. Please note that A Level certificates will shortly be posted home to all our former students.

'Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols'

This event will still be going ahead as planned on Tuesday, 14 December (7.30 pm) at Holy Trinity Church.

'The Midnight Playground'

We have rescheduled our Drama production on the following dates:

Tuesday, 11 January, 6.30 pm

Wednesday, 12 January, 2.00 pm matinee and 6.30 pm

and

Thursday, 13 January, 6.30 pm.

Finally, can I thank all students and staff for their participation in this week's M&P week. It was great to see such a wide range of activities taking place. We intend to build on this for our next M&P week in February.

Next week's message – the final one of this term – will be in video format and be available on Moodle for students and both SharePoint and our website for parents/carers.

Best wishes to you all,

Simon

Issue raised:

College response:

Movement around College

In the survey, 72% of respondents said they could get from one lesson to another with ease. 96% of respondents said there were no areas on campus where they felt unsafe. However, some students said the corridors felt crowded, there are often large numbers of students socialising near the smoking area and that the main hall is extremely busy.

Going forward, the Social Area Supervisors will assist in ensuring students can pass in corridors safely. Once building work on the new science block starts in the new year, the smoking area will move to a different part of the College, away from the student entrance. Members of the senior team and Student Area Supervisors will monitor large crowds in the main hall.

To clarify my message to students of 25 November, it is College policy for teaching staff to finish their period 1 and period 4 lessons a few minutes early. (This also encompasses periods 3 and 5 on Fridays.) As the College has recently grown in size, we have made this decision to give students extra time to get to their next lesson.

The senior team will also give consideration to modifying the timetable so that a formal five-minute handover slot is built into the timetable for next year.

Sexual harassment

No student reported that they had experienced sexual harassment *in* College, but 3% of the survey respondents said they had experienced sexual harassment during their time *at* College, specifically cat-calling, sexist jokes and wolf-whistling by members of the public on public transport and outside the bus and rail stations.

We have raised awareness within the student population about the issue of sexual harassment in Tutorial lessons and signage around College. We have recently been running some focus groups on this issue. We will be seeking support from our Police Community Support Officer and addressing the issues raised by the focus groups concerning public transport with the Local Authority and other relevant organisations.

We have recently implemented a new Sexual Harassment Policy, applicable to both staff and students. Additionally, all staff are now required to complete a Sexual Harassment e-course to improve their understanding of sexual violence, sexual harassment, the relevant law and statutory guidance, as well as how to support young people experiencing sexual violence.

Communal and study space

76% of survey respondents said they could locate a quiet space to study in their study periods. However, a number of students expressed concern that the College should reinforce quiet study conditions in G1 and open up more rooms at lunchtime.

The College is in the process of appointing a new G1 supervisor who will reinforce quiet study. Since half-term, we have allowed students to use R1, R5 and R6 during lunchtimes. (To clarify, students *are* allowed to eat their lunch in these rooms, providing any litter is tidied away afterwards.)

65% of students said they had difficulty finding a place to eat at break/lunchtime. During lunchtime, the majority of rooms in College are being used for enrichment or support sessions. However, from January we will direct students to rooms that are available to ease congestion in corridors.

84% of respondents said they could locate a computer to work on in their study periods. However, some students said they didn't know which other computer rooms were available. To clarify, the rooms are G1 (the Study Area), the Library, C9, C10, D10 and G7.

Toilets

87% of our respondents said that toilet facilities are adequate and queues reasonable. A number of respondents said the availability of sanitary products was really helpful to them. However, concerns were expressed that some taps are overly hot, sinks often have lots of water in them and many hand-dryers are of poor quality.

The Premises team will turn the temperature down and check drainage. We have also asked the team to check hand dryers for effectiveness.

Prayer room

Tutor reps. have asked the College to provide a larger prayer room. In addition, many Muslim students have asked for provision to be made for male and female students to pray separately in College. Unfortunately, given the size of the student population at Greenhead College and the availability of space, we are currently unable to provide students with a larger room.

However, we will ensure that dividers are placed in D5 (the current prayer room) to ensure that male and female Muslim students can pray separately.

We ask that the prayer room is not used for socialising and that food and drink are not consumed in this room. Our Student Area Supervisors will be checking D5 to ensure that students are being compliant with this instruction.

Canteen and shop

81% of respondents to the survey were in agreement that they are able to get served in the shop within a reasonable time.

However, some students expressed concern about the 'cash only' till, where queues do tend to form quickly. Concerns have also been raised about the price of food and the lack of awareness of allergies and dietary requirements.

We will raise these concerns with Aramark, the catering contractor for the College, and get back to students with an update in due course. A separate coffee shop, located near the student entrance, will open shortly and this will take away congestion from the main shop.

Enrichment

Only 43% of respondents said they could opt for the enrichment activity of choice. In response to this, Tutor reps. have asked whether there could be more opportunities for student-led activities and organised societies to meet (currently virtually).

We are very happy to accommodate requests such as this. Please let us know what you'd like to put on and we will consider each request.

Recycling

Tutor reps. are concerned about the lack of recycling bins around the campus. (One suggestion was to have large and clearly-labelled bins in busy areas such as the main hall and small, cardboard bins in each classroom.)

The College is keen to support this idea and take it forward. We will shortly be asking for student volunteers to contribute to the development of this project.

Water fountains

Students would like to see more water fountains placed around College so they can refill their bottles during the day.

There are currently three water fountains in the main hall. Unfortunately, due to drainage issues in certain areas we are unable to provide students with any more water fountains in the current configuration of the campus. When the new science block is erected, we will be putting more water fountains in this building.

Optional email listing

It was suggested by Tutor reps. that there should be an optional form on Moodle whereby students could sign-up to receive certain listings but not receive blanket emails. However, the senior team considers that that College has a duty to give *all* students this information. In particular, we feel that the emails sent by the Careers department ensure that all students are able to make a considered judgement about the range of options available to them, i.e. higher education, apprenticeship, employment, etc.

Lab. coats

Some Tutor reps. studying science subjects feel it would be more eco-friendly for the College to lend disposable plastic aprons to students who have forgotten their lab coats to practical lessons. As certain chemicals can seep through plastic, we feel all lab coats need to be of cotton variety. We also feel that it would not be environmentally-friendly to routinely use plastic lab coats.

Use of C6

Some Tutor reps. said that some students had been using C6 (Additional Learning Support) as a social space. This issue has subsequently been addressed.

English Literature textbooks

Some Tutor reps. who study A Level English Literature said it would be easier for them to purchase the required texts through College rather than externally from publishers. The Head of English Literature acknowledges that new editions of set texts have recently been issued, leading to students having a mixture of new and old editions with a variation in terms of page numbers and references. The department will investigate whether it can arrange a bulk buy from the publishers (similar to other departments) so that next year, all English Literature students can receive the new and latest copy to work from. The College will also seek to engineer a discount and look at using Wisepay to facilitate payments for these.