



South Thames Colleges Group

26th March 2021

Dear students and families

I hope very much that you're well and managing successfully through this challenging time.

I'm writing to make sure you know how we're making progress as we reopen our Colleges and looking ahead through Easter and beyond.

We have three priorities over the weeks ahead.

1) We want you to keep learning

We have reopened our Colleges safely, securely, and successfully in a phased way. Thank you so much for your patience with us and your support for the teaching and support staff across the Group as we have opened our doors and invited our priority students back into our buildings.

In the weeks ahead, we will continue to open more of our courses to on-site delivery as well as starting new programmes for those coming into learning. Your course tutors will be in touch shortly or may have already contacted you to tell you about the timetable for teaching after Easter.

We are very keen to help you make the progress you expected to see and will do all we can to close any gaps in your learning that may have opened up. Please continue to attend all your lessons and take part in learning fully.

2) Your safety is very important to us

We have tried very hard to keep everyone in our Colleges safe and well through all of this difficult time and we are going to keep our focus on safety and wellbeing as we go into the Summer.

To do this, we want you to continue to be very strict in your own routines:

- Do not come to College if you are unwell. If you have any Coronavirus symptoms at all, please stay at home and arrange to have a PCR test
- Please avoid public transport in travelling to College if you can
- Please wear your face-covering at all times in College unless you have had your individual needs assessed by our Learning Support team and have received an exemption badge. We will review our requirements over Easter, but we continue to expect people to wear face coverings all the time in College at the moment
- Please pay close attention to hygiene, washing your hands regularly and cleaning spaces around you
- Observe social distancing as much as possible, staying 2m or more away from everyone else as much as you can
- We encourage all students to take a Covid 19 - Coronavirus asymptomatic test prior to your first lesson in college each week and then 3-5 days later. You can take the test via a Home Test Kit or by booking an asymptomatic Covid 19 Test through a Community Testing Venue, local to

where you live, work or study. It is important that you log the results as directed on the instruction with the NHS Track and Trace and on the colleges' Moodle system. The college system is quick and easy and just requires you to provide your test result. The college is asking you to continue this process every week

- As from the 19th of April all students will be able to collect their Covid 19 - asymptomatic home testing kits from the college. The collection points and times will be advertised in the entrance to the colleges

We have carried out thousands of lateral flow tests so far in our College and found only one positive case so far. This allowed us to protect that student, the rest of the class, teachers and their family. It is very important that you use our testing system regularly and often so we can stop any infections before they spread.

We have added information about community testing and how to access it at the end of this letter.

We are also very keen to protect your wellbeing and, as ever, want to make sure we know if there is any support you may need to help you cope. We understand how difficult and stressful this time may be for you and ask that you tell us if there is anything we can do to help you cope with anxiety, depression, grief or any other challenges that you may need to overcome as you return to onsite learning.

We are also working with the local NHS to make sure there are resources for you to access in the community or on-line and can offer you this link to a wealth of materials and ideas that may help you. It's available via our Moodle site:

<https://moodle.stcg.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=25418>

3) You will be given a fair grade for your course

For those of you on courses that will be receiving a Qualification Level Teacher Assessed Grade (Q-TAG) our teaching teams will be working hard over the next few weeks to make sure they have a complete picture of your skills, knowledge and progress over the past year. They will use as much of your completed work as possible to decide what grade best reflects your success on your course and will do this in a fair way. If any part of your programme is being awarded a Q-TAG you will already have received details regarding the process. Please do contact your course tutor if you have any questions or are unsure if this process applies to you.

Before Q-TAG results are submitted to the awarding bodies we will tell you what work we are using to make this judgement so that you can be assured that we are using the widest body of evidence possible. This will also give you a further opportunity to contact us if you have any additional questions or queries regarding the evidence base we will be using.

For those of you on courses where there are delayed or amended exams or assessments please continue to pay close attention to your College emails to ensure you keep up-to-date with guidance and expectations as they are sent to you by your tutor.

It is very important that you continue to attend your lessons, either on-line or in College to build up your knowledge and skills, and that you continue to complete any work set. We want to give you the best and fairest chance to show how much progress you have made and to gain the best grades possible. Please make sure you ask for help if you need it.

We look forward very much to the weeks ahead and to seeing more of you as we reopen our College sites further this Spring and Summer.

Please take good care of yourself and let us know if there is more we can do to help you make the progress you expected.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Mayhew-Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping underline.

Peter Mayhew-Smith
Group Principal and CEO

Community Testing for those without Covid 19 symptoms

All local areas are offering regular Covid 19 tests for anyone who regularly leaves home, whether that is to go to work or come to college to undertake a course. You can book a test through the following link at a venue near where you live, work or study. We advise all our students to undertake regular testing. You can find your nearest test centre through the following link at the bottom of the page to book in your local area.

Book a lateral flow test

If you need to leave your home for any reason during the national lockdown, you can help stop the spread with a free COVID-19 lateral flow test up to twice a week at your local community testing centre.

Around 1 in 3 people who have COVID-19 don't have any symptoms and can spread it without knowing. Lateral flow testing is for those people who are **not** displaying any COVID-19 symptoms and provides rapid results within around 30 minutes.

Who can get a test

These free tests are available to anyone with a valid reason to leave home during the national lockdown. This includes those leaving home for work, studying, volunteering, or supporting a vulnerable person.

Twice weekly testing is recommended to all those who are accessing our lateral flow test sites, especially those who are frontline workers in direct contact with local residents, volunteers, formal/informal carers and others who are not covered by other testing programmes. This includes those in the health and social care, education and transport sectors. Ideally you should book your tests 3 to 4 days apart.

Testing in London please click the link or type into Google your post code and the nearest community Covid 18 testing venue.

- [Croydon](#)
- [Kingston upon Thames](#)
- [Merton](#)
- [Sutton](#)
- [Lambeth](#)
- [Southwark](#)
- [Hounslow](#)
- [Hammersmith and Fulham](#)
- [Kensington and Chelsea](#)
- [Westminster](#)