

23rd April 2021

Dear students and families

As we reach the end of our first week back at College, we're very pleased to have seen so many of you returning to our sites and pressing ahead with your learning. It's been an incredibly tough year, I know, but we're determined to finish well with you and give you as full an experience of College life this term as we possibly can.

So, there's lots to say as this term gets underway and I'd like you to take a little time to read through this letter as it contains some important information and reminders.

1) Your safety

Our first concern is for everyone's welfare. We want you to be safe and well every day you're a student here and we want you to help others stay safe and well, too.

I have attached a note to this letter, reminding you of the key safety measures you will need to follow on-site and it's important that you know they are taken very seriously and are not optional. Please continue with the outstanding commitment you have shown throughout this crisis to your own wellbeing and that of others.

The key things to note are:

- Please do not come to College if you are unwell. If you have coronavirus symptoms, do not come to College and book yourself a PCR test
- Try to avoid public transport if you can; if possible, walk or cycle to College. We understand that it's not easy to do this, but try to reduce your use of trains and buses if you can
- Please take regular Lateral Flow tests when you are feeling well. You can collect test kits from your College and it is very important that everyone plays their part in finding and trapping the virus by using regular tests and we expect you to do these every three to five days and register the result with the NHS and on our Moodle site
- Follow the safety rules set out on the attached sheet

Vaccinations are critical to our work to help stop the pandemic. We are strongly encouraging everyone to take up the opportunity to be vaccinated if it's offered to you and we can offer you more information about the vaccination programme here:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

2) Wellbeing support

This is a time of significant challenge and we understand that there may be a number of difficult things to overcome as you return to College and look ahead to passing your course and then, beyond that, to your next steps in the new academic year.

Please don't worry. Talk to your tutor or one of the student services team if you have concerns and let's make sure we understand how we can help you. We have plenty of resources and support plans in place and are keen to make sure you're all right.

If you'd like to use some of the materials and other contacts we have in place, please use the resources we have put together for you on Moodle as a start. They're all here:

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

We have also created a set of resources for parents and carers, available here:

<https://stcg.ac.uk/about/parents>

3) Safeguarding

We know there has been a lot of discussion about the safeguarding of young and vulnerable people in school and College recently. We have very high standards of safeguarding in place and trained staff to manage any situations in which someone has been mistreated or is worried about any kind of harm.

We will take every possible safeguarding issue very seriously and, if you have any concerns at all, we would ask you to come forward and talk through the problems you may be facing.

We are also committed to teaching everyone about high standards of respectful behaviour and deal very firmly with any kind of harassment, bullying or abuse. All of our students should expect to live their lives free of threat and we actively play our part in removing any inappropriate conduct from our Colleges.

4) Qualification Teacher-assessed grades (QTAGs)

For those of you on qualifications where you will be awarded a QTAG our teaching teams are working hard to make sure we have fair, objective and evidence based grades in place for all of our students. They will be reviewing the work you have done and possibly setting you new tasks to complete in some areas.

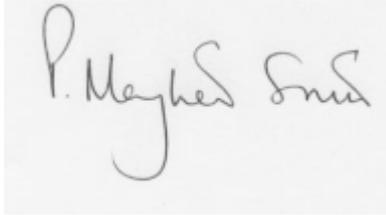
5) Exams and Formal Assessments

Many of you will be working hard towards final exams and/or formal assessments over the coming weeks and months. We have ensured that all exams and assessments can take place safely and in line with available guidance. Please continue to attend all exam opportunities available to you and to follow all the health and safety guidance provided.

For all our students it's very important that you continue to attend College and also complete any work set for you. Please speak to your teachers if you have any concerns or challenges in coming into College or finishing any of the tasks you have been set.

We will also want to help you make decisions about your next steps and can provide guidance to you to help you make good decisions about work or study in the future. Again, please speak to your teacher if you need to talk to someone about your plans for the future.

We all hope very much that you have a successful term ahead and give you our promise that we will work with you to build your achievement and support your progression. We wish you all the very best through the busy weeks ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature reads "P. Mayhew-Smith" in a cursive style.

Peter Mayhew-Smith

Group Principal and CEO

Control measures for Coronavirus Spring/Summer 2021

Welcome back to South Thames Colleges Group as we go into the Summer term 2021

We are going to need to work with you make sure you and everyone around you are safe during the weeks ahead.

We are going to ask you to do certain things because we don't want anyone to become infected with Coronavirus at College. Some staff and some students are vulnerable and we want them to be safe at College and we'd like you to help us keep them safe.

So, we're asking you to do these things:

1. Do not come to College if you have Coronavirus symptoms
2. Do not come to College if you have had a positive test for Coronavirus
3. Do not come to College if you have had contact with someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus
4. Make sure you have read our list of risk factors to help you decide whether you need to talk to a health professional to get advice about protective measures you could take before you attend College
5. When you come to College, please avoid using public transport if you can.
6. When you arrive at College, we will check your temperature. If it is high, we will ask you to wait a little while, then check it again. If it is still high, we will ask you to go home
7. When you're in College, please try to maintain a two metre distance from other people wherever possible. We especially want to protect all our staff and students and ask you to be very careful in staying two metres away from everyone at all times and only coming nearer when absolutely necessary
8. We expect you to wear a face covering at all times unless you have a confirmed medical or social reason for not wearing one
9. Please be very hygienic. Wash your hands or sanitise them regularly, put waste in the bins and catch your coughs and sneezes
10. Please help College staff to keep everyone safe; if they ask you to do something, it is for a good reason and we know you will want to help us keep Coronavirus under control
11. Please make sure you are taking regular tests, every three to five days a week, to check whether you have the Coronavirus. Log your results with the NHS and on our Moodle site. You can pick up test kits from your College
12. If you are offered a vaccination, we encourage you very strongly to take it

We want everyone to stay safe and well. Please play your part and help us make this a healthy, happy term. Please ask if there is anything you are unsure of or need more advice about.