

3 April 2020

Dear parent /carer

It has been said many times but this is a very unusual and uncertain period for the UK and indeed the world. Some parts of our community may be more directly affected than others but I want to start by offering our very best wishes to you all. I hope this finds you all safe and well.

Our main aim over the coming weeks is to offer your young person some access to education alongside continued support academically, practically and emotionally. They will have many questions – as will you – and I will try and address as many as I can below:

1. Why is the college closed?

We have closed face to face teaching for the majority of learners to fall in line with the government's guidance. Campuses have remained open for vulnerable learners and we have taught them in increasingly small numbers over the last 2 weeks. The decision to close any campus has been made where numbers coming in have been tiny (below 5 students) and they could be accommodated somewhere else in the group. This has helped us send home a lot more of our own staff but has never stopped the offer. We will be closed over Easter but will re-open for these same students on April 20th.

2. How does my young person continue learning?

All students have been given access to online learning. The college website has instructions for logging on and these were also shared with learners before the buildings were closed & have been communicated to everyone through other methods: letters, emails and texts etc. There is a video online to help you log on – and a pictorial version which some may find easier. Where this is not the right way to access materials, we have sent work home and will continue to do so. For the majority of learners, lessons have been continuing via a range of online forums. The College has lent out more than 400 laptops to help learners continue to work from home. Every student has a New City College email address and they should check this regularly for communication from the college.

3. What happens about their results?

We have been assured by the Department for Education and by the prime minister that learners will get their qualifications. We are working hard to ensure that all work from before the crisis has been completed and recorded and that learners continue to work on their skills set. We know that all awarding bodies want to make sure everyone gets their qualifications and we know that some of them have already given us an idea what this will look like. We are sending letters to affected learners (mainly by email) as this information comes out, but you can be assured that we will be fighting for fair outcomes for every learner.

Please help your young person stay calm – there will be a solution and we will update you on this, via the website, as soon as there is news.

4. What happens about returning to college next year?

It is our intention to welcome back the majority of our learners next academic year onto the next stage of their education. The actual outcome of this will not be affected by the Corona Virus but it might change how we enrol, or when. For our existing learners we will look, as always, at attendance (but given recent

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events we will go by attendance before March 11th 2020), behaviour, predicted achievement and how each learner has kept in touch and kept working during this period of closure. We will use all of our recorded evidence of in-year work to support these decisions so a dedicated learner who is keen to continue should not be anxious about the future.

#### 5. What happens about progressing outside college?

However long the current crisis lasts, we know that universities will have places to fill and employers will need good reliable employees to take up vacancies across the UK. So long as our young people are able to demonstrate their skills in some form and are keen to commit to whatever the next stage holds, we do not believe they will be materially disadvantaged. Many universities have already pledged to stand by any offers they have made regardless of outcomes. We advise that your young person contacts any university who has made them an offer and check.

#### 6. Will these grades mean anything?

It's totally fair to worry about whether missed exams and different approaches to qualifications will affect the value of the achievement of your young person. It's important to remember however, that their skills set will still have been developed, their understanding of the subject is there, whether examined or not, and their right to progress is as valid as that of people in the year above or below. The current position is the same for all young people across the UK so we must assume that universities and employers will recognise these as valid outcomes achieved in unusual circumstances.

#### 7. How will I know what to do next to support my loved one?

Please keep watching this page. As soon as we have information, we will share it with you – and answer any questions that may arise. Our mission is to support your young person throughout this situation. We have online counsellors available now and across the whole term (including the Easter Holidays) if any of our learners need to talk to someone. We'll work on further advice and support as the summer term progresses and begin the process of enrolling for next year as soon as possible to give reassurance for those who want to return in September.

Above all, please stay in touch – we welcome your comments and hope to be able to support you, our community, throughout the current crisis.

Stay safe. Stay calm – we will get through this together.

Janet Smith and Alison Arnaud

Principals