Coronavirus Update

As you know, Coronavirus continues to move at a pace and like everyone else I am extremely concerned about this. The Government’s new measures announced yesterday evening mean that like many other organisations we are having to now make our own decisions about the risks we feel we need to manage.

As a result, we have made the decision as a College to cease all face to face teaching and learning at the College and to move to remote online teaching and learning from Thursday 19th March 2020. We hope to reopen College on Monday 20th April 2020, after the Easter break. This means our buildings will be closed to students from 4.15pm on Wednesday 18th March.

My number one priority is you, our students, and our staff. If you are in one of the vulnerable student groups identified by the Government yesterday, and you have not already started your learning remotely from home, please feel able to do so from this evening. You do not need to wait until 4.15pm tomorrow. Just let us know.

We have been preparing for remote learning over the last few days and you can now access all the online resources needed to continue learning at home. These currently cover work from Thursday 19th March to Friday 3rd April 2020, the start of the Easter break. Your individual teachers will have told you where these online learning resources are for their subjects (Moodle etc.), how you can access them from home, how you can submit any work for assessment and feedback, and how you can communicate with them about the work (email through CEDAR).

We would like to provide some additional clarity regarding yesterday’s information in regards to access to IT at home whilst we are remote learning. Please see the amended paragraph below. We apologise for this but we are working hard to try and meet as many of our students needs as we can in a short period of time.

To ensure our students are not disadvantaged by the decision to move to remote learning, we have been asking you for the last few days to let us know if you do not have access to any IT hardware at all at home. We apologise but we noted this deadline as 4.15pm on Wednesday but it should have been by 12.15pm on Wednesday to give us the time to evaluate the response, review individual student circumstances and if possible, to assign our limited stock to each student by 4.15pm, Wednesday. The email address to let us know is stuhelp@huddnewcoll.ac.uk’

This will enable us to review all the requests we receive before we move to remote learning. Please note that as part of this response we are looking to provide hard copies of work where necessary. This is an unprecedented situation for us as a College, and we appreciate your patience and support during this time.

At home, you will then be expected to be working online during your timetabled lessons, unless you are too ill to do so (in this instance, if you are able, please email via CEDAR your teachers directly to let them know this). Your teachers will be doing the same, working online during their timetabled lessons, unless they are too ill to do so (and they will, if they are able, inform you by email via CEDAR to let you know this), and so you will be able to communicate with them real time via a CEDAR email. Their response will be by email too, so you must check your College email on a daily basis.
Formal year 12 examinations under supervised examination conditions will not now take place. Your teachers may decide to conduct these examinations remotely but this will depend on feasibility. I would ask that if your teacher does determine a remote year 12 examination is feasible, and conducts one as planned, that you treat it seriously, as they will be doing this to help you to continue to make progress.

For all students on work experience or work placement, please inform your employer tomorrow that you are being withdrawn from your work experience or work placement with effect from Thursday 19th March, and when and where possible, the College will be in contact with them to rearrange this for you. As with all other students, you are then required to move to online learning from home.

Students in receipt of a 16-19 bursary or in receipt of a Free School Meal allowance will continue to receive these during this period of remote learning.

We appreciate that online learning from home, supported remotely by your teachers, will be more challenging for you than face to face teaching and learning. Just over two weeks of such learning will however enable you to hone your independent learning skills, which are essential for those of you wishing to progress from the College to university, and which are also much valued by employers.

We are aware that similar steps are being taken by other Colleges and our response to the evolving Coronavirus situation may be different in parts, but this is not a one size fits all response to this crisis. We are taking an approach that is right for Huddersfield New College, where daily 2500 young people travel a distance to the College, many on public transport, buses and trains, giving them, and consequently their families, greater likelihood of exposure to the virus. And whilst as young people you are not identified as a high risk group, you may be asymptomatic carriers of the virus, placing others more vulnerable at risk. In this respect, we are also following the Government’s request for social distancing, reducing the normal daily contacts our students and our staff make either travelling to and/or at their place of learning/work.

Your education and your health and well-being are vitally important to us and I hope that you all stay safe and well in the days ahead. If however you have any concerns about your safety and well-being during this period, our Safeguarding team will still be available to help you. Simply email: safeguarding@huddnewcoll.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about your health, as previously advised, please follow the excellent advice of Public Health England.

Thank you for the very calm and adult way in which you have responded to this rapidly evolving Coronavirus situation. We have been so impressed by your conduct and by your commitment to your studies and your success in these exceptional times. We are committed to your success too, and we believe the measures outlined above will allow you to continue to study and to make progress, in a different way than usual, but one that is safer for all.

This is an unprecedented situation for everyone. We like you want to return to normal College life as soon as is possible, and I genuinely hope to see you all after the Easter break. However, I have to be realistic and say that we cannot predict what will happen in this fast paced and changing crisis situation. If you are checking your College emails at least daily, as requested above, and you make a point of following us regularly on social media, that is where we will post any updates on the post Easter period and about the summer examination series (we have had no updates from Ofqual to date).

Take care,

Angela Williams OBE
Principal