

28 January 2021

Dear Student,

As we continue to experience the challenges and uncertainties of this Covid pandemic, I wanted to write to you directly as Principal of Buxton & Leek College to explain in a little more detail what we are planning for the remainder of this academic year. It is bound to be difficult to put firm plans in place when the virus itself is changing, the national regulations change and the Government guidance for educational institutions changes, sometimes every day. Although some of the timings may have to change, our objectives as a College, to make sure that you get the best possible support to achieve the qualifications in your programme of learning, remain the same.

For everyone's safety and well-being, most of our staff and students are currently working remotely. The schedules of learning have needed to change, so that more of the 'theory' work from the programme is covered while we are all locked down. If you are on a programme that normally has a high practical learning focus, I understand that you might feel that you are missing out on these experiences. We planned at the start of the year to cover as much practical work as possible in the first term and in most subjects, this was successful. However, we are already planning the best way to cover the remaining practical elements when we are allowed to re-open our campus facilities.

Once we do re-open, it is likely that programmes with significant practical work will return first. By then we will have Covid testing facilities on all main sites, that will mean students and staff attending during the daytime will be regularly tested, even without Covid symptoms, to ensure that the risk is reduced as much as possible for everyone until, as a result of widespread vaccination, everything can go back to near normal.

It is important that we make the most of the time spent working remotely and although we intend that none of the learning time is lost, we will have delivered more of the theory sessions than we had originally planned at this point in the year. The practical delivery will therefore need to be the focus during the last term of this year, so that you will have built the full range of knowledge and skills in time to complete any year-end assessments and to prepare for your next steps.

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You will have heard from the Government that GCSE, A Level and some technical examinations have been cancelled. It is important that you have a clear understanding that the cancellation of exams and the use of 'teacher assessed grades' doesn't mean that you will only be assessed on work completed in the first term of this year. It is vitally important that you continue to engage in remote learning and complete all assignment work given to you during this time. You will also need to have gained the full range of knowledge and skills by the end of the year in order to complete assignments, practical tasks or other alternative forms of assessment that will be used instead of exams to determine your competence, your outcome grades and your opportunities for progression.

Although we had originally planned to return from this current period of remote learning on 22nd February, after the coming half-term break, we now know that this has been postponed again until at least 8th March. The Government has recently said that they will provide us with two-week's notice, ahead of permission to return and as soon as we have a firm return date, we will provide you with detailed instructions on what is expected, this may involve a visit to our on-site Covid test centre before you can return to College.

In the meantime, I hope that you are working well on all remote learning activities and remember to contact your progress coach or your teachers if you are experiencing any difficulties, especially if you have any problems connecting to the online learning sessions or materials.

Yours sincerely,



**Len Tildsley**  
PRINCIPAL

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