Dear students, parents and carers

I hope that you are keeping safe and well. Whilst it is good to hear that Covid infection rates are starting to decline across our area, they continue to remain high. In the Public Health briefings I have attended this week, we have also been told that this new highly transmissible variant is now accounting for over half the current cases across Merseyside and is particularly prevalent in the under 40’s, who are now the largest infected group.

I am glad to report that in terms of college, numbers have now significantly declined and we have had very few positive cases being reported and only a very small number of staff and students having self-isolate. Please do continue to inform college if you have a positive test or are self-isolating, even if you are still working from home.

We are now into our second week of Covid testing at college and are carrying out over 60 tests a week for those staff and students who are coming on site. Can I take this opportunity to give a big thank you to the college testing teams for such a fantastic job and also make a particular mention of how great our Foundation Learners have been – they are real stars in getting on with the tests with their usual happy approach and are going to be our Testing Ambassadors when we roll out the wider programme.

Today is also Holocaust Memorial Day and we are holding a remote college service as we do every year. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day this year is ‘Be the light in the darkness’. It encourages everyone to reflect on the depths humanity can sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities resisted that darkness to ‘be the light’ before, during and after genocide. A link to a recording of the college service is available here https://youtu.be/23u8mO2G8iY

Thursday 4th February - Learning Preparation Day/Student Enrichment Day

In light of the recent feedback and guidance we have received from Ofsted and the DfE re effective online learning we are proposing to halt ‘live’ teaching on Thursday 4th February and give staff time to put together some recorded material and/or links to external resources.

Students will be set work for this week and lessons will continue online as normal on all other days that week. We will also be offering students a day of online Pastoral/careers/enrichment throughout Thursday.

Year 0 students: this is your Assessment week and we will continue as planned throughout the week.

Foundation Learners will continue to follow their timetable and so all lessons will run as normal all week.
Online security and safety

Following on from the information sheet regarding homeworking we sent out recently please visit the ‘get safe online’ website that has a banner on Connect. This is an excellent source of information and free expert advice. https://www.getsafeonline.org/

Internal exams

For those of you that diligently follow the college calendar, it is still showing that there will be internal exams starting week beginning the 8th February 2021. Can I just clarify, there will be NO Exams this week. We are still awaiting updates on the decisions around the summer grading/exams and we will be looking at rescheduling internal exams for Lower and upper 6th students later in the Spring.

Apprenticeship Week

Here at Carmel College our Careers Department support all of our students to achieve their Career goals, therefore we are celebrating National Apprenticeship week commencing 8th February. We are updating our Apprenticeship section on Connect (under Careers & Employability) with lots of tips on how and where to search for Apprenticeships, and we will be adding Apprenticeship Vacancies to our Vacancy page when we see them. Students can still email careers.team@carmel.ac.uk for a Careers appointment if they need more support. The team will be emailing events out to students in the coming weeks.

There are lots of webinars that parents and guardians can register for and learn all about the amazing opportunities Degree level apprenticeships offers students. Please take a look at the following sites and sign up:

Manchester Metropolitan University Introduction to Degree Apprenticeship Event for Parents and Students: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introduction-to-degree-apprenticeships-for-parents-and-guardians-tickets-137816168871utm_source=eventbrite&utm_medium=email&utm_content= follow_notification&utm_campaign= following_published_event &utm_term= Introduction+to+Degree+Apprenticeships+for+Parents+and+Guardians &aff=ebemoffollowpublishemail

UCAS Discover Apprenticeships Event: https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships/discover-apprenticeships

Amazing Apprenticeships Parents Guide: https://amazingapprenticeships.com/parents/

Best wishes

Mike Hill
Principal