

Dear Students

Following the recent government changes in relation to lockdown, you may be starting to think about how Iron Mill College will be managing the “lifting of lockdown” process. IMC has a detailed plan which will be adapted as necessary according to developing government advice. I am writing with a very brief overview of this plan to keep you informed. We will be in touch with the further information you will need at each step. I would like to reassure you that the safety and wellbeing of all staff, students and their families will come first in all decisions we make during the process, and individual circumstances will be taken fully into account.

Phase 1: Preparing to come out of lockdown.

We are now in Phase 1. For the foreseeable future, *nothing will change* for most staff and students. We will continue to deliver training online exactly as we are now. However, in the background we are busy getting ready for Phase 2, including planning, rotas, risk assessments, health and safety consultations, and technology/ facilities’ arrangements. We will also be working to ensure we are aware of who our ‘shielded’ staff and students are, and respond to individual support needs, ready for Phases 2 and 3.

Phase 2: Resuming strictly limited physical attendance

Initially, the majority of teaching will remain online during Phase 2 – however, if and when our assessments and preparations suggest it is safe to do so, we will also start to introduce some strictly limited opportunities for attendance at College, to facilitate personal interaction and practical skills work. To keep everyone as safe as possible, there will be strict limits on the number of people permitted in the building/s on any one day. This will involve a limited number of allocated days for attendance per group, and your tutor will develop a rota with you so that only part of the group will attend on any one of those days. We will respect the choice of any student who prefers not to attend in person at this stage. Social distancing will remain in place, and detailed instructions and requirements for hygiene and use of shared spaces will be issued in advance.

Phase 3: Resuming attendance and activities

All academic staff and students start to physically attend for most of work and classes, to be increased over time as appropriate, with some exceptions and restrictions remaining in place to comply with safety guidance. We will issue clear information at the time. Shielded individuals will be able to choose to work from home online until shielding is deemed by the government to be no longer required. College risk assessments will remain in place, monitored and reviewed weekly, and health and safety advice and procedures will remain in place.

Phase 4: Lockdown is lifted fully for FE/HE institutes

All classes and college activities will revert to pre-COVID19 attendance, with few restrictions remaining in place. The IMC Monthly Risk Assessment Review will remain in place, however, along with ongoing monitoring and management in relation to the college response to COVID-19 in line with government advice. Microsoft Teams will remain in place to offer an additional ongoing method of contact and support for students and staff, and to allow teaching to continue taking place safely during weather alerts, future virus outbreaks, or similar.

We will issue clear information as the lifting of lockdown progresses. The timing of the phases is not yet known, as it will be in line with public health advice and the progress of COVID-19. **If you would like to inform us about your need for shielding, or if you are concerned about your personal circumstances due to COVID-19, please contact Jan Cavill, Programmes Lead: jan.cavill@ironmill.co.uk to arrange a friendly and supportive phone/ Teams call.**