

WEEKLY UPDATE



Dear Colleagues,

I can't believe it's a week since we started to work remotely. I have been so impressed with the way in which you have responded to this and can't thank you enough for your support!

Every day the senior leadership team has been meeting up, through MS Teams. It took us a day to get all of the technology right and since then we have been working hard, like you, to run the business. Student feedback in all areas has been excellent and we have some really fantastic success stories. Let's face it, we all need to hear more good news, so keep this going and let Sally have your student successes, with photos, if they are available.

I would also like you to share individual staff stories too...you can send them to me so I can share them through our social media news feed. Just a few lines, a photo and your permission for me to share this on LinkedIn, Twitter etc. I would like to prepare one staff news story per day to inspire and celebrate the exceptional work you and your teams are doing. So, there's a challenge (as if you need any more) and if you email this to me, I'll get back to you and share as soon as I can.

So, thank you, thank you, thank you! Keep in touch with each other, stay safe and I hope you enjoy reading a little something about the things some of our teams have been up to. Keep safe and thanks again – it's a privilege to work with you!

Sue
Your Principal

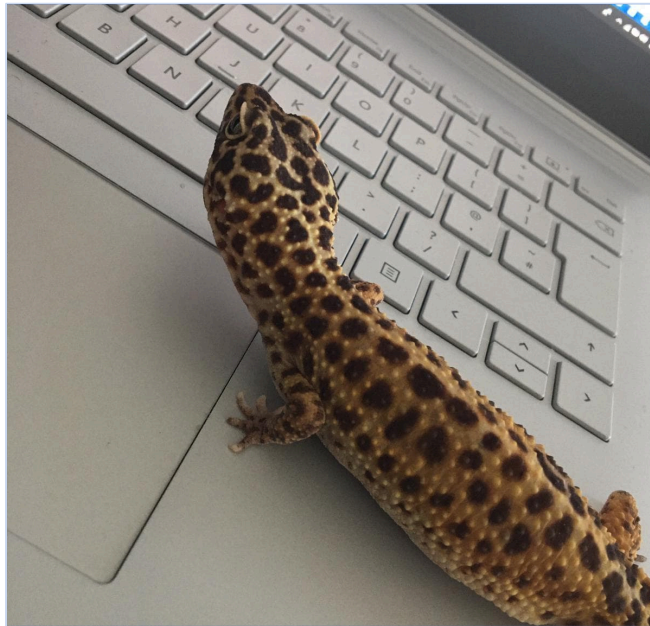
Updates from curriculum teams across the College

Animal Management

The Animal Management team has done a fantastic job, finding temporary homes for the large number of animals we have in this faculty and we are so grateful to the large number of volunteers who are 'fostering' our animals at this time. All were rehomed last week; thanks also go to the Facilities team who provided excellent support to make sure this all ran smoothly and that our animal friends were rehomed safely and securely.

Students are all working on a huge range of tasks and assignments, as our impressive range of online materials supports learning from home. All personal tutors have checked that their student groups are OK and their progress is being logged on their individual learning plans, using ProMonitor.

The team has also created new instructional YouTube videos for students to access online and forums have been set up on all level 1 to level 3 course pages so students can support each other in their virtual learning and share tips and resources.



Travel & Tourism

It's strange to think that whilst the world around us is changed beyond recognition, in relation to this sector, we are working online to support the next generation of people who will be joining it, when this Covid19 horror is over. So, our students have been working hard online and one of our Travel & Tourism students, Amber Hossack (right), received a commendation from her tutor for completing the first home learning task 4 days before it was due.



[Read more on Twitter](#)

Hospitality & Catering

It's a challenge for us all at the moment and the advice not to stock pile food is so important if we are all to get through this together. This is another industry that has been hit hard by the current challenges, with our bar, cafes and restaurants closing. That said, we must look forward to the time when we will need more talented chefs and service staff. One such talent is our former student, Sean Noonan, who has let us know that he is through to the semi-finals of the North West Young Chef competition. We are so proud of him, not just because his talent has been recognised, but also because at this difficult time, he is providing online cookery demonstrations to help people. What a star!

[Read more on Twitter](#)

Science

The Science teaching team have been busy contacting students to ensure they are all coping with this new way of working. Meanwhile, our Science Technicians have been looking at their procedures and planning on how to improve the preparation and execution of practical work next year. One new measure in development is an enhanced chemical stock system – to ensure we always have a sufficient of the most important chemicals, but also to keep an eye on expiry dates – to avoid any possible degradation of the chemicals, and enhance the quality and accuracy of practical work.

Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy

How fortunate are some people, with our hairdressing students at home, with only their family as models. In trying out their skills on other members of their household, they have had great results and Tutor Esther has been updating our Hairdressing and Beauty Therapies Instagram page with photos of the work that students have created.

[Follow the Instagram account](#)

English & Maths

Students have been engaging really well with developing their English and maths online. Some have been completing tasks up to three times, in order to really embed their learning and improve their skills. Whilst emailing a creative writing piece to his tutor, one of our students said how much they had appreciated this task.

Computing

The Computing team are all in good spirits and have taken to this new way of working like ducks to water; this could well be a real-life case study that will equip their industry with business, well into the future! The team has been having daily meetings using Zoom which is helping to structure their days. Work has been set by all tutors, for all courses at all levels and the keen students are engaging well with this. The team has also made use of messaging on the VLE which has allowed students to communicate with each other whilst Google hangouts and Google docs have also featured well. Big shout out to our level 3 student, Mahir Syed Ahmed, who has been commended by his Maths Tutor for engaging so well with the work set, producing great work on time and to the highest quality.

Prep 4 Life

Independent Options students have been working through the paper-based work they were sent out last week. Some students don't have IT facilities at home, and others work better on paper, so this is the best approach for them and so we have accommodated that. We had organised a freepost service but since Government mandated that we all stay at home, we have adapted this by asking families to photograph the work and email it back to us where possible.



Prep 4 Work students are managing to work remotely on the VLE, and are completing units from home.

We had a lovely note from Ben's (independent options student) mum who emailed in to tell his tutor *'Ben has enjoyed doing the work thank you.'*

Other Independent Options students have been sending in photos of themselves enjoying working from home, including Jai H (below) and Connor S (above) who has a message for us all to stay safe.

Whilst Luke, one of our Supported Interns, has just heard that he has gained permanent employment with B&M. Well done Luke!



Engineering

Feedback from Engineering students has been very good with many of our students working exceptionally well using our remote learning model. Some of our level 1 Motor Vehicle students have been working so hard on their level 1 programme that we have started to introduce them to aspects of the next level already.

ESOL and Languages

In addition to our VLE, we have made sure that all of our ESOL students have paper-based work packs. Due to limited access to facilities we have also adapted the medium used, to keep all students engaged using smartphones, where access to Wi-Fi is a problem.

Tutors are also helping students to overcome some technical issues, so alongside learning English, they are developing their digital skills. Meanwhile, the British Sign Language (BSL) team is also working with students, to help them to become more familiar with studying at home and fit their study around family commitments. All student feedback has been positive and students have expressed real gratitude for the support they are receiving. Student Ibrahim Ibrahim said: *"Thank you Maria (Jackson), you are working hard for all students at this difficult time. I would like to thank you."*

Art, Design & Creative Media

The team has been busy supporting students remotely and using ProMonitor to record individual student targets and progress. They also wanted to pass on their thanks to Faculty Administrator Natalie Young for her support to the team. One of our BA (Hons) Illustration with Animation tutors has adapted their scheme of work, asking students to record 'staying at home' through a series of beautiful illustrations. This includes drawing mundane tasks like house chores, views from windows, pets, etc. Life Drawing on Friday involved the first-year students working from YouTube videos, and although this can be tricky, the artwork created was stunning. This promises to be a very good exhibition for when the crisis is over!

Construction

The news has been dominated by construction workers and the importance this sector plays in our economy. At the end of this nightmare, we are making sure that our students are well placed to engage in the opportunities that will be available. Allan, our Carpentry and Joinery lecturer, has been developing coaching materials for his students who will be entering the WorldSkills UK competitions in the future. Allan recently attended a WorldSkills masterclass session, gaining an insight to how the competitions are judged, so that he can use the training to support our students to excel in these competitions.

Teaching staff from all Construction trades are gaining positive feedback from their students and tutor Tony Campbell commented about his appreciation when the work being returned included a note saying, *'Thanks Tony, stay safe'*.

Additional Learning Support

The ALS team continues to offer learning support whilst students are working remotely and wanted to thank our brilliant IT team for their help with issuing College mobile phones to

support this work. Our Mental Health & Well-being Officers and Student Counsellors have been busy working with students with high levels of anxiety, which has been increased even further, by the current situation. This service is proving even more vital than ever at this challenging time. The ALS team are also available for staff. So if you need advice about how to support your students let them know. Staff can continue to refer students to this service.

Pastoral Support Mentors

Our Pastoral Mentors' phones have been too hot to handle this week, as they have been contacting their most vulnerable students to make sure they are coping with remote learning, as well as offering pastoral support. Students have been very appreciative of this support and have even been asking when they can return to College! Some are raising concerns about their attendance mark, which we have reassured them about. Some students have been struggling to access assignments or don't have computers at home and our Mentors have been liaising with tutors and college managers, where appropriate to put specific support in for those students.

Forum Housing and Bed Space, both partner organisations agencies who we work with and who offer accommodation to our vulnerable students, have been in touch and sent up-to-date contacts for our Mentor team so they can assist any of their residents who are struggling. One student rang and stated that he has been at home self-isolating for about three weeks. It is making him 'crazy' but, with support, he has taken the opportunity to give up smoking.

Students' Union / Enrichment & Engagement

Students' Union are in the process of pulling together materials to promote the importance of wellbeing, specifically whilst we are all 'social distancing' which can itself cause anxiety. These will be available on our staff and student intranet and will be linked to our Wellbeing Wheel. They are for everyone and if any of you identify something that helps you, chances are, it will benefit others, do send those through to Sarah Norris. The resources include physical activities, new skills, relaxation techniques, quizzes and weekly prizes.

They are also developing a Virtual Fresher's Page, which will include links to all of the regular agencies that support Wirral Met students. These will be live from Monday 30th March and promoted to students via College email. The team has also continued to support students via email with questions and support and is promoting Mental Health Awareness at this time.

Safeguarding

Lorraine and the team have been busy ensuring that all of our statutory processes remain in place. Much more than that, we realise that at this time it is even more important as the additional pressure on families is significant, whether it's financial, emotional or physical. College for many of our students is their safe haven and sometimes their only social interaction with others outside the family home; please bear this in mind when you are talking to them and remind them that our support team remains available to help.

Social Workers, Foster Carers and Support Workers have all been contacted to keep them up

to date with the current circumstances and remote learning arrangements. Personal Education Plan (PEPs) are still required during this time, so if you receive a request for information to help inform this process for your student, please respond in a timely fashion. We have very strict deadlines imposed with this process and, even if you only have 1 or 2 students who require a PEP; the College as a whole has 89 so do please respond to all requests, and get in touch if you need guidance.

Updates from Business Support teams

Marketing

The Marketing team has been working on our prospectuses and updating our social media accounts with student case studies. They are also chasing up case study forms with former students to increase the number of alumni case studies we have in place. If you know of a former student who would be happy to share their progress in their career, please email marketing@wmc.ac.uk with their contact details.



The team are also working behind the scenes on updating our website to ensure it is compliant with the latest accessibility requirements. Our very own apprentice, Will (left) has been working hard from home, completing essential Search Engine Optimisation actions, alongside creating labour market infographics to promote careers and courses.

“Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much”

– Helen Keller