

UPDATES

For all parents and carers of students at Sir George Monoux College
February 2021



LATEST UPDATES

Vocational students

We really understand how hard students need to work during lockdown alongside many other pressures. When we have these discussions, we often notice that students need support with developing good home working routines, and are not making use of the afternoon to complete coursework. Please reflect on this, and use your weekly call if you need some helpful advice from a member of staff!

At the same time, we do recognise the number of assignments are building up, and these are more challenging to complete from home. Therefore, we have decided to take up a recent offer from Pearson of reducing the number of units required to achieve each qualification. This means that you will have more time to complete and achieve your best work on fewer units. It will not reduce your overall qualification grade. Your teacher will be in touch to let you know what that means for you - but for now, you must continue to complete the work that has been set to the deadlines you already have.

News on qualifications

We are waiting for news from Ofqual and the Government on how you will be assessed this spring/summer. We will communicate with you as soon as we are clear about the plans. Remember that the qualifications you will receive will be based on the work you are doing now and over the coming months - it is so important that you continue now to work to the best of your ability

College opening during half-term

The College will be open from 10-3pm each weekday (Monday to Friday) during half-term for students to come in and complete assignments/work. This can be used if you do not have access to technology or a quiet place to study at home, or if you are classified as vulnerable (speak to your personal mentor or Support Link if you think this applies to you). Please note the canteen will not be open so you will need to bring your own food and drink.

Mental health and well-being

Over this half-term, we have made almost 7000 weekly calls to students as part of the Support Link scheme. This won't happen over half-term - as staff will be giving their voices a well-earned break! However, if you are struggling with your well-being, or just need a chat with a member of staff over the half-term break, email: info@sgmc.ac.uk between 9-4 and we will give you a call. This cannot be used for emergencies though - so remember to dial 999 in an emergency, or contact one of these external services.

Tech

Please email info@sgmc.ac.uk if you need data to access your lessons or need to loan a laptop.

Covid 19

If you develop any Covid-19 symptoms, test positive for the virus or have someone in your household who develops symptoms, you should continue to let the college know by emailing info@sgmc.ac.uk Also, beware of some of the 'fake news' circulating online - this recent video from the BBC is quite interesting - a journalist tracking some fake news her Mum received on WhatsApp

Careers & HE

Reminder - Careers and HE Fair/Passport Careers and HE Day on the 25th and 26th Feb - we already have some excellent employers, universities and alumni lined up to deliver online talks to students. This will be followed by Passport Days on the 4th and 5th March, where progressing students will complete their first shortlist of university and apprenticeships.

Virtual work experience

Keep an eye on Monoux Hub for the virtual work experience newsletter coming out today or tomorrow - why not challenge yourself to complete one of these activities in half-term? Last week's is here if you want to view that too! Its in a new 'Sway' version so easier to click on the links too.

I hope that you have a good half-term when it comes - remember to follow the Covid-19 restrictions for the health and well-being of yourself and your family.

ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Latest from the government about how you will be graded

The government has published its plans for how you will get graded this summer and one thing is crystal clear: you will be assessed on what you are learning now, and you will be assessed on the work you are doing now and over the coming months. There are no plans to go back to predicted grades as happened in summer 2020.

So, it's really important that you are in lessons, and able to do your work. Remember, the college is open to any student who doesn't have their own laptop or computer from 9am to 4pm every day.

We really hope to welcome you all back to the classroom soon (and once it's safe). There is no fixed date yet, but a good guess might be some time in March – although it could be earlier, after the February half term.

Keep working hard, and keep exercising and eating as healthily as you can. We know this is a difficult time, but it will pass, and soon you will be out with friends and family – and maybe even on the campus of your top choice university!

If you want to have your say on these plans, you can respond here: [How 2021 could look for students and learners – we want your views - The Ofqual blog](#). The deadline is next Friday.

PARENT UPDATE

Lessons

From tomorrow (Thursday 7th January) we will like last time be running lessons according to a schedule of three one-hour lessons (so Period 1 = 9.30-10.30am, Period 2 = 10.45-11.45am, and Period 3 = 12.00-1.00pm). We know it can be challenging for you when you are sharing laptops and trying to find a quiet space to work, and we hope that this change to lesson times will help you. The Monoux app will update overnight to

Although lesson time is reduced, that the work set for you by your teachers will be the same in scope and depth as it would be at other times (so you should be working independently outside of lessons for at least 15 hours per week, and submitting that work on Teams to deadline. Pictures of handwritten work will be acceptable in most cases – just make sure the picture and your writing are clear!

Lessons are live so the teacher will be with you throughout and you will need to 'arrive' promptly at lessons and be prepared to participate through your mic and/or in chat. If you are having problems accessing lessons from home because of technology or lack of space, you must tell your teacher in advance so that they can make adaptations for you (or ask you to work from college where possible).

Registers will be taken as normal, and we will continue to treat unauthorised absence or lack of work to deadline as a serious disciplinary issue unless we have good reason not to do so

READY TO LEARN ONLINE

Ready to learn for lesson start-time

Environment is distraction-free as possible

Attention on the lesson at all times, be prepared to answer questions at any time throughout the lesson

Do behave politely and professionally (with appropriate dress and language)

Your key assessments and homework are completed to a good standard and on time

Exams and assessments

Following from Dave's message last night, we had to decide very quickly what to do when the government announced yesterday evening that colleges could choose whether or not to run exams. This was a tough call, and I personally felt saddened as I have seen teachers and students working incredibly hard to get ready for these exams. However, with Waltham Forest Covid-rates remaining very high, we made the best decision we could for our students, many of whom have vulnerable family members.

We don't yet know what exactly will replace normal exams and assessments, but we do know it will involve teachers assessing your work, rather than predicting grades as happened last time. This means you must keep working with us and keep in touch if there are any problems.

Students who had been due to sit external exams in January will be doing an assessment on the same skills and knowledge they have been preparing for. We do not want to lose the opportunity to test you and give you feedback, and we want to reward those students who have been working hard - especially as this might help to evidence your end of year grade. Your teachers will give you more detail about this in the coming days. You will not need to come to college to do these tests.

We have postponed formal AL1 PPEs until we are back in college. I know many students have been preparing diligently for these, and your teachers will be assessing you and taking account of your hard work throughout this period.

SUPPORT FOR STUDY

The college continues to be open for students who need to use our space and resources. The LRC will be open every day between 9am-4pm. Currently we are not operating a booking system for this but may need to do so in future if spaces start to fill up.

You must continue to participate fully in your education – it is the best thing for your mental wellbeing and future prosperity. If you can't access lessons at home, you must come into college. (And if that is difficult to do for any reason, you need to communicate about that with us).

There is currently no canteen service, so you will need to provide your own food if working on site.

Masks must be worn on site and strict social distancing will be maintained to keep students and staff safe.

By next Tuesday, you will receive a message from a member of staff who will be your Support Link during the online learning period. They will call you regularly to check on your well-being and engagement with lessons and assignments.

Keeping in touch

By next Tuesday, you will receive a message from a member of staff who will be your Support Link during the online learning period. They will call you regularly to check on your wellbeing and engagement with lessons and assignments.

The Library will be open from 9:00 to 4:00 Monday - Friday for students who do not have technology at home, a quiet place to study or who are vulnerable. In the Library, you will be able to access lessons online or complete work. There will be no canteen facilities, so you should bring your own food if needed. Masks must be worn and strict social distancing will be maintained to keep students and staff safe.

Each week, a cohort of students will be required to complete our Monoux Employability Passport. This will help you develop key employability skills and include a Zoom workshop with employers. With face to face work experience unlikely to happen this year, this will be a key addition to your CV and university applications.

Talent Lab will be online with a daily activity for you to engage with if you wish – this might be something fun, creative or the opportunity to try something new at home.

Attending lessons, keeping up to date with assignments, engaging with your Support Link, and completing the Monoux Employability Passport during this time will form a key part of your Monoux Graduation.

If you develop any Covid-19 symptoms, test positive for the virus or have someone in your household who develops symptoms, you should let the college know by emailing info@sgmc.ac.uk

Free School Meals and Bursary payments will be made as soon as possible. Please check your emails for updates on this. We have a very small number of laptops available to loan for bursary students only – and you can contact info@sgmc.ac.uk to apply for one.

The college is also open from 9:00 – 4:00 Monday - Friday for students who might be distressed, or need somewhere safe to be. If you feel unsafe, or at risk of harm, remember to tell any member of staff such as your teacher, Support Link or Personal Mentor – they will know what to do. Outside college hours, you will need to contact external support agencies and always call 999 in an emergency.

We will be in urgent contact with the small number final year students who have not yet completed their UCAS application.

Holly Bembridge,
Vice Principal - Curriculum