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Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you all today following the recent Government announcement that we should now begin to prepare our Colleges to re-open across the EKC Group. Whilst this will be on a very limited basis, we are planning to reopen our Colleges to invited students from 1 June 2020 (subject to final Government clearance). We will contact the initial group of students to notify them that they are invited to attend their College. It is planned that this will be done by Friday 22 May.

We will be prioritising those students who are unable to complete their qualifications without a return to College. This is almost exclusively those who require practical assessments and those who need to complete examinations that cannot be taken from home. We accept that many students will want to come back to College but in the early stages the numbers will be small and so we ask you to be patient if your young person(s) are not in the first phase.

Obviously, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all of our students and staff is a core priority, and that is why we will be taking a range of measures to make certain that if your young person is amongst those invited to come in to the College, it will be a safe environment for them. We will be holding two sessions each day, with one in the morning between 10am and 12.30pm and one in the afternoon between 1.30pm and 4pm. Students will only be invited to attend one of these sessions per day. This is to ensure that your young person isn't required to travel during peak hours, whilst also enabling all areas which are used to be fully cleaned during the one-hour cross over. As we will not be able to provide hot food during these two sessions (we will still provide cold drinks but would recommend students bring reusable bottles where

possible), it also lessens the number of staff on-site, ensuring that risks are minimised. We are following all the Government guidelines around ensuring a safe environment rigorously, so that you can feel confident that when your young person is in College, they will be welcomed into a safe space.

However, I know that many of you are likely to still be anxious or may be living with those who are shielding and need to completely remove the risk of transmission of coronavirus. To that end, this is an invitation to attend and will not be mandatory. We believe that you and the young person are best placed to make this decision and we will respect your choice.

Whilst I can appreciate that you are likely to have a number of questions, I hope that as we move toward 1 June 2020 you will feel confident that your young person can access our College environments to continue towards completion of their course. For those who are returning more specific guidance will be issued on the conditions for returning and the expected behaviours.

Please continue to follow Government advice and stay alert, whilst continuing to keep yourselves safe and well. We will continue to issue guidance on our website and social media, so please check ekcgroup.ac.uk for the latest updates.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Razey
Chief Executive Officer

FAQs on reopening our Colleges

Will all students be coming back?

No, we will only be inviting students in that need to be on site in order to use equipment to continue their learning, or complete assessments. We will contact these students directly in the run up to 1 June.

Do students have to attend?

No students will be told they must attend the College. We would like to give them the opportunity to do so, in order for them to complete their qualification in this Academic Year, but we recognise many students may be anxious or living with those who are shielding. Therefore, we will simply invite students to attend.

What will happen about mealtimes?

In order to limit the numbers of staff on site, we will have two sessions for students each day. One will be in the morning, and one will take place in the afternoon. As no student will be allowed to attend more than one session each day, they should not require a hot meal in College. We will provide cold drinks for students. If students are able to do so, we would ask that they bring their own reusable bottles to refill, as we also have water stations which they will be able to access.

What measures will you be taking to minimise risk?

We will ensure that social distancing regulations are followed throughout the time students come on to the College site, with clearly signposted routes to and from their learning areas. These will not cross over with other curriculum areas, so students will remain in silos. We will also clean the whole College every evening and give all areas which have been used during the day a thorough clean during the hour-long lunch break. We will also be robustly risk assessing the plans in line with Government guidelines, to ensure that the College environments remain safe for your child. Class sizes will also be lowered significantly across all areas, so that we can ensure all students are able to work safely without breaching any social distancing guidelines.