Hereford College of Arts

HCA's Covid Code Updated January 17, 2022

The Covid Code is HCA's response to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and should be used in conjunction with the college's health and safety, risk assessment, safeguarding and other relevant policies and procedures. It has been produced in line with the most recent government guidelines (Further Education COVID-19 operational guidance) and where appropriate other government guidelines have also been used as a reference point.

• Part 1 outlines the HCA Covid Code

• Part 2 outlines procedures around ensuring compliance

As the situation and guidelines change the **HCA Covid Code** may also be subject to change. In particular, the college may re-introduce some infection control measures that have previously been suspended depending on government guidance.

The college has a **Covid Outbreak Management Plan** outlining likely actions in the event of an outbreak, depending on advice from Public Health England and other appropriate bodies.

A **COVID-19 Cross College Risk Assessment** is published on the college website including the risks and mitigations taken in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the college community. This is updated as necessary.

The Code is complemented by responses to FAQs on the Covid information section of the college website and the college guidelines for staff or students becoming symptomatic on campus.

HCA Covid Code Part 1

Basic Principles of the HCA Covid Code infection prevention are;

- Get fully vaccinated (unless medically screened as unsuitable)
- Know the symptoms of COVID-19 and stay off campus if you develop any of them, self- isolate and take a test as soon as possible.
- Test twice a week at home for COVID-19 without symptoms with lateral flow tests
- Clean your hands thoroughly and frequently
- Catch coughs hygienically
- Keep your space clean
- Respect social distancing when practical
- Keep windows and doors open to improve ventilation when you can safely

- Students are required to wear face coverings when moving around inside the campus and in communal areas as well as studios, workshops, IT, libraries and teaching spaces unless mask exempt (government guidance updated January 2022)
- Staff are required to wear a face covering in communal spaces (as above) and when moving around the campus, unless registered exempt but may teach without a face covering if keeping social distance, for example at the front of a class
- Students and staff who are exempt from wearing face coverings are asked to where a green exemption lanyard in order to ensure others know they are exempt

COVID-19 Symptoms

The Omicron variant of COVID-19 is more transmissible than other variants and although symptoms seem milder in most cases, some people are still becoming very unwell after contracting the virus.

Core symptoms of COVID-19 remain:

- a new and continuous cough
- a high temperature (fever)
- a loss or change to your normal sense of smell and taste.

However, not all people experience any of these three symptoms. The symptoms of the Omicron variant of the virus have been compared to a common cold, with a scratchy throat and congestion/a runny nose appearing amongst the most common symptoms, sometimes presenting with additions of other symptoms like lower back pain, a headache, tiredness and aches.

What to do if you contract COVID-19

If you get a positive rapid lateral flow test result you must self-isolate immediately and report your absence to college.

Most people will not need to take a PCR test to confirm the result (exceptions include those taking part in medical trials). This is a temporary change in government guidance whilst the prevalence of Covid infection is so high (Jan 2022).

If you develop symptoms the guidance remains you must self-isolate and secure a PCR test.

Anyone who tests positive will be able to leave self-isolation after 5 full days if they get a negative lateral flow on day 5 and then again 24 hours later.

There is a lot more information about Covid available from the NHS online, and students and staff should check the NHS if in any doubt.

When to self-isolate

If you develop symptoms, self-isolate straight away and get a **PCR test** [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus (COVID-19) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk)

You should also self-isolate straight away if you have tested positive for COVID-19 whether by lateral flow test or PCR.

When not to self-isolate

If you live with or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, you **will not** need to self-isolate if any of the following apply:

- you're fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since your final dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine
- you're under 18 years and 6 months' old
- you're taking part or have taken part in an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Even if you do not have symptoms, you're strongly advised to:

- do daily rapid lateral flow tests (1 a day for 7 days), if you're fully vaccinated, to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 find out more about daily testing on GOV.UK
- follow advice on how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19
- consider limiting contact with people who are at higher risk from COVID-19

If you are self-isolating then you must not

- go to work, school or public places
- go on public transport or use taxis
- go out to get food and medicine – order it online or by phone, or ask someone to bring it to your home
- have visitors in your home, including friends and family – except for people providing essential care
- go out to exercise – exercise at home or in your garden, if you have one

You can however temporarily leave self-isolation to post a PCR test or antibody test at a Royal Mail priority post box, get food or medicine if you cannot order it online or by phone, or you cannot ask someone to bring it to your home.

The latest guidance can be found [Coronavirus (COVID-19) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](www.nhs.uk)

Students and staff should always inform the college by

- Contacting registry on 01432 845304 or
- Emailing absent@hca.ac.uk making it clear the reason for absence is COVID-19 symptoms
- Staff should inform their line manager and personnel as soon as possible

Home testing for Covid without symptoms

All students and staff accessing the campus are expected to test for Covid without symptoms at home twice a week and report the results to the NHS.

Staff are also asked to report to college by emailing staffnegative@hca.ac.uk or contacting personnel directly if positive. This is an important measure to help identify asymptomatic cases of the virus and enable us to continue to deliver face to face teaching and learning.

Students and staff who choose not to participate in lateral flow (rapid) testing will still be able to access campus.

Clean your hands

• All staff, students and visitors should sanitise hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds when entering the building, studio/workshop or new environment and regularly through the day particularly having used the toilets or before eating.

• Staff and students should also clean hands thoroughly after using any shared equipment.

• For NHS guidelines on effective handwashing see How to wash your hands –

How to wash your hands - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

- We recommend that students wash or sanitise their hands when returning to work space after a break, when changing rooms and before and after eating
- Bottles of hand sanitiser and wipes are available within each teaching space, and can be collected by staff from designated areas on both campuses (currently College Road Campus ground floor kitchen/Folly general staff room) if areas are running low
- Students and staff are encouraged to bring their own small bottle of hand sanitiser to enhance general hand sanitisation
- Use air hand driers or paper towels to dry hands
- Ensure hand towels are appropriately binned

Catch Coughs

Staff and students should follow 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach to coughs and sneezes disposing of tissues appropriately in bins and cleaning hands afterwards

Keep your space clean

- Students and staff should ensure that areas they are working in are kept as tidy as possible
- Enhanced cleaning of shared areas is being maintained including regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces such as door handles and handrails, using detergents
- Students and staff are responsible for wiping down any equipment before and after use, for example: keyboards mice, and desk phone if shared

- Staff can collect additional supplies of wipes and sanitiser from designated rooms, currently the ground floor kitchen (College Road) or staff room (Folly Lane campus), screens are also available for study/work spaces
- If any additional cleaning equipment is required, it can be requested from maintenance@hca.ac.uk
- Students and staff should not share equipment without cleaning between uses
- If learning spaces are being used by different groups throughout the day each group should ensure that surfaces and areas have been wiped down before leaving the session. This does not usually include cleaning floors, the only exception where it may be appropriate to clean the floor is after a movement/dance session based on the risk assessment.

Students should be briefed and encouraged to be extra vigilant when cleaning up after themselves during break and lunch times. This includes using the bins provided for litter and wiping down surfaces after they have used them. Sharing food, drink and water bottles is discouraged and should be avoided.

Respect social distancing

Maintaining your distance from other people is one of the most important measures to prevent the spread of infection. All staff and students should maintain social distance where space allows, it is important we all respect each other's different risks and concerns around Covid and behave with care and courtesy at all times.

- 'Keep to the Right' principle applies in all corridors, stairwells and high traffic areas. Wheelchair users and those with a physical disability have right of way and only need to 'keep to the right' if possible.

Ventilate rooms

Staff will improve ventilation by opening windows and doors in work spaces where possible to create air flows. Students and staff should dress appropriately to support this. Where it is difficult to maintain a flow of fresh air then staff should try where possible to refresh air periodically (at least every half hour) by opening a number of windows simultaneously for a short period.

Open internal doors (not fire doors) when possible to support ventilation.

Follow the guidance in individual rooms regarding the use of air conditioning.

Face coverings

- Students and staff should to wear face coverings (unless exempt) in studios and performance space, communal spaces such as IT suites, corridors, workshops and libraries and when moving around the college buildings.
- Students and staff do not need to wear face coverings when seated in the café areas eating/drinking, but please wear face coverings when collecting food/drinks.
- Students and staff are responsible for bringing their own mask(s) to college/work and storing them appropriately (a small plastic zip lock bag is recommended).

- A small selection of disposable masks and zip lock bags are available at reception for students or staff who misplace or forget them
- Students and staff should follow guidelines on the safe putting on and taking off of masks including cleaning hands before and after and avoiding touching your face. [Face masks: How to wear one correctly - BBC News](#)
- Students and staff are advised to bring 2 masks and change them if damp
- Students and staff may wear transparent masks to aid others' lip reading and reading facial expressions
- Under no circumstances should anyone share their mask with another person

Visitors to campus

- Staff hosting visitors should ask them to take a lateral flow (rapid) test prior to their visit and on arrival they should be reminded to wear a face covering on site (unless exempt)
- Students **should not** invite visitors into college buildings on either campus

Code Part 2 Covid Code Compliance

Students and staff are all expected to follow HCA's Covid Code and national guidelines around COVID-19 on campus and off.

Student compliance:

Repeated failure to uphold the HCA Covid Code or any student seen to be deliberately in breach may result in a period of exclusion from the campus or in the event of an extreme breach of the HCA Covid Code, permanent exclusion.

- In the first instance, a member of staff will remind the student failing to comply with the Covid Code guidance
- Students concerned about other students' compliance may politely remind the student concerned directly or raise their concerns with a member of staff
- Repeated reminders of a minor infringement by staff or a more significant (in the judgement of the college) or deliberate infringement will result in a formal written warning
- Failure to comply after the written warning may result in a temporary exclusion from HCA campuses
- Failure to comply after an exclusion will result in a longer exclusion and potentially, in an extreme case, permanent exclusion through the formal disciplinary process.

Staff compliance:

- Staff concerned about another member of staff's compliance may politely remind them of Covid Code guidance
- Staff may also report a concern to personnel
- Line managers may be asked to remind staff about minor infringements
- Repeated minor infringements or more serious infringement (in the judgement of the college) may be addressed through the staff disciplinary process

- Staff are expected to follow Covid guidelines off campus as well as at work as failure to follow these guidelines may endanger staff and students and bring the college into disrepute
- Staff are expected to promote the Covid Code to students and support student compliance.

We want everyone to understand and support the Covid Code. If you have any questions or suggestions, students should raise them with a member of staff. Staff should raise any questions with their line manager or personnel.