

Thu 10/09/2020 14:59

Dear Colleagues,

New Restrictions

You may have seen the Prime Minister yesterday warning about the potential of a 'second spike' and making it clear that we are in this for the long haul. You may also have been alerted to the changes being introduced across the devolved Nations. There is always a lag between Downing Street announcements and the detailed guidance being published. At the time of writing, members of the C-OPT group are delving into the details beyond the news stories. At first glance, and as last words go, they may not be famous, but the impact for FSC appears to be "minimal". Education settings and Covid secure operations like ours can carry on, but we do need the details on what can be allowed in our self-catering properties. The guidance is for England although other areas of the UK have already reduced the numbers of people who can meet up. The C-OPT group will keep us up to date with all these changes so look out for those.

Covid-19 –Staff Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey

Thanks to everyone who took the time to fill in the survey and for the considered comments that were made. We are still working through the results but Helen Robertson has produced a really useful summary that will be put on the [staff wellbeing page](#) of the website shortly. The data comes with lots of caveats as you might expect: the small sample size, under-representation of some locations and teams and the ongoing difficulty of engaging staff who are currently not at work or not at their usual location. However it has produced some really useful insights and given us some issues to address. It will be discussed in more detail at next week's Board of Trustees meeting.

Comms protocol

I was pleased to see that our efforts to increase staff communications to keep people informed about both FSC and the wider issues impacting on the business have been appreciated but it's no time to get complacent. I have drafted an internal communications protocol just to make sure that 'all staff' communication is as clear and timely as possible. I will aim to share that with you shortly.

Unfinished business with Ofqual

The removal of fieldwork from the 2021 exam series was a huge disappointment but the game is not over yet. One area of guidance that is still up for discussion is around the collection of primary data for A level geography Non Examined Assessments (NEAs) and the questions about fieldwork in the GCSE exam. FSC is closely involved in the discussions and the guidance for teachers on what and how students are expected to gather their primary data is due out soon. Watch this space.

Education Update

Millport and Dale have both welcomed university groups which is great news. We will of course be doing all that we can to encourage other universities to follow the example. Whatever the outcome of the Ofqual guidance on primary data collection, the new products from the education team will be available to support teachers to cover the content and help students catchup. Digital courses have already gone live with 12 schools purchasing packages within the first 48 hours. Blended courses will go live next week. Day visits are already happening at a growing number of centres. This has been a huge collaborative effort to move us to this new arena of education that, if I may be so bold, is far in front of any competitors in the sector. Staff from all regions and central services have been involved to produce something on which we can continue to build. Well done and thank you to those who have brought this together. There will be a public 'live launch' of all our day, outreach, blended and digital courses at 4pm on the 21st Sept on YouTube. This really is a showcasing event so

do tune in. We also have a number of email promotions and social media campaigns scheduled to take place, so do look out for those.

News from FSC Partners

Thanks for the positive feedback on including news from other organisations in this update. This week's newsletter is from the Royal Geographical Society and you can [click the link](#) for their latest education news. Of particular interest this week is that another of our partners, the Geographical Association has just launched [GEO](#) which is a new website specifically for GCSE and A level geography students. We are supporting this by leading a number of the tutorials and if you scroll down to the third article you will see more about the way in which FSC is supporting fieldwork and teachers with our new products.

Petitions to allow residential

Frustratingly government guidance still prevents school residential. A few weeks ago I highlighted one petition aimed at the Westminster government which is still just short of the 10,000 signatures needed to secure a response from the government. If you haven't managed to sign it yet, please take a moment to do so via this link <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/330559>

This week in Scotland a similar petition was launched as part of the #SaveYourOutdoorCentres campaign. The Scottish Government's advice to local authorities is that school residential trips should not take place until at least the Spring term in 2021. Although FSC is in a better position than some organisations, the sector is taking a battering and no financial support has been forthcoming from the Scottish Government so far. A petition <https://www.change.org/saveyouroutdoorcentres> has been set up, please take a moment to sign and share that one too.

Special Mentions

FSC Millport has been shortlisted in the NatureScot business Awards in the 'Best Practice Environmental Sustainability in a Residential Centre' category. Congratulations to Paul Alston who is marrying Sue today, after having to delay their wedding from earlier in the year.

Finally two sets of thanks. One is to the members of the HR team who have been very busy supporting the collective consultation process, working long hours on behalf of all of us. The second is that having recently taken part in the Head Office training session on how we are making that particular building Covid-Secure, it's a good time to acknowledge just what goes into keeping our centres clean and safe for all of our staff and visitors. Describing them as 'Enhanced Cleaning Regimes' doesn't really do justice to the huge effort that is made by our hospitality staff several times a day. Without them we would not be Covid Secure, and we would have no business. Thank you for playing your vital role in keeping this charity going.

Stay well and keep safe

Mark