

Thu 15/07/2021 11:23

Dear Colleagues,

Guidance for the autumn term

England and Wales have both produced detailed guidance for the autumn term which will certainly help with planning for what looks like a busy time. The first minister of Wales also announced yesterday that in bringing forward some of the changes, groups of 30 from organisations such as the Brownies could stay in residential centres from 17th July. Scotland too has set out more information and a direction of travel. Everybody needs to continue to act carefully and remain cautious, and there is a lot of discussion in many sectors around safety for everyone, business continuity and face coverings in particular. FSC has always said that we will follow all the guidelines, it's just when the guidelines leave it up to interpretation that things become more difficult. We are working through all these complex decisions.

Ofqual the Sequel

Following the changes to fieldwork and NEA, Ofqual have published more proposals for the 2022 exams. There are two specific areas of interest for FSC. One is a degree of content optionality in GCSE geography and the other is to continue with last year's rather unimaginative changes to practical science subjects. The geography proposals have an entire annex to themselves where the detailed options for each exam board are set out and you can see them [here](#).

Staff Talk

Thank you to Tim, Helen and Zena for delivering Monday's staff talk on health, safety and staff wellbeing. The main messages that I took away from the talk were firstly the need to report incidents and near misses as well as accidents because the former will help reduce the latter. Secondly, that there is a wealth of health and wellbeing advice and benefits for staff which you can find [here](#). With the forecast set for some good weather, Westfield Health can help with the cost of prescription sun glasses and if anyone remembers that experience called the cinema, Westfield Rewards has discounted tickets. As centres get busy, we know attending the live talk isn't possible for everyone which makes the online catch up option even more important. You can see the talk [here](#).

Return of Staff Contracts

I realise that many of you have been particularly busy and that this has been a difficult period for everyone, but it is important that if you haven't done so already, you need to return a signed copy of the new contracts that were issued to you earlier in the year. Can I therefore please ask that you print, sign and scan (or photograph) the full Summary Contract and return it via email to hr@field-studies-council.org within the next 7 days. If this isn't possible, you can instead respond to the original email which contained the contract, explaining why you are unable to return a fully signed copy and confirming that you "accept the attached new contract in its entirety". For this to be acceptable you must also reattach a copy of the unsigned contract. If you require a further copy of the contract to be sent out to you or have any queries regarding the content of the contract please contact the HR Department via hr@field-studies-council.org Can I also please ask that all managers remind your staff that this needs to be done.

Tax Relief for Working from Home

Now's a good time to remind you all about the HMRC tax allowance for working from home. Simply log onto <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home> (try to avoid searching on google as there are many scam sites). You can claim tax relief on £6 for every week that you have worked from home, so a 20% tax payer would receive £1.20 for each week so over a year it comes to £62.40 and HMRC will pay it as cash straight into your bank account. Sam Dhadwar has road tested the system which he found easy and only took about 5 minutes. He submitted his claim on Sunday, received an email acceptance on Wednesday and the money will be in his account next week. So the next round is on him.

Special mention

I have received a nomination for the Finance Team because they have processed so many deposit transfers for rescheduled bookings and they have also spent quite a long time on pricing work for new courses behind the scenes. But they always do so with a smile. Well done team.

Keep safe and stay well

Mark