Date: 31st August 2020

Dear Learners, Parents/Carers,

Ref: WELCOME BACK

We are now at the start of a new academic year and I’d like to take this opportunity to say ‘welcome back‘ to everyone associated with the Ridge Employability College.

I have pleasure in bringing back all the current staff to college sites and introducing new members as we expand our teaching team. All learners from last year are returning to college to continue their education and we have number of new learners joining us too.

We value very much our learners right to access education and the college continued to deliver home learning and contact days through the summer term. This was all done cautiously and within Government guidelines. We all have lots to reflect on through lockdown but we are looking forward to bringing everyone back together and continuing our education journey together. This will still be delivered cautiously, in line with current guidance to keep us all safe.

Over the summer, staff and supporters of the Ridge including our local tradesmen and contractors have worked hard to implement plans to extend the college sites. This is so we can bring everyone back for increasing periods of time to maximise face to face learning. There will be an element of remote teaching for all learners via Microsoft Teams or Zoom on their timetables. This is to ensure we have an established method of remote teaching in the event of further restrictions being placed on Doncaster or the country as a whole so learning will continue.

Over the past few weeks everyone has had their personalised timetables emailed to them along with communications last week confirming individualised transport arrangements. Email and text will be used much more this year to communicate information to you to ensure everyone has the latest information as quickly as possible. My letters to the college community will also be released to you via the website and email.

We will welcome new learners to college on the 1st September for 4 days before they are joined by the returning learners on 7th and 8th September. All learners will access a varied and challenging timetable for the start of the term with consideration for everyone’s wellbeing being a thread throughout the college.

An enormous amount of planning has been undertaken by staff to ensure we do our very best for every learner and we will review this as we progress through the new term. We will be flexible in our approach to the start of the Autumn term and we will continue to monitor government guidance as the decision to open all schools is assessed.

College is going to be different when everyone returns to the sites this term and I am happy to talk to learners and parents about any concerns you may have now or during the next few weeks.

During the summer we continued to support the After College Club. For the After College Club to continue it does need learners to support it so the schedule can be maintained. Learners usually meet up 4 nights a week in a social environment for fun and food. This is under review so we can meet the new social distancing rules and guidance. A new look timetable will be launched once learners are back during the half term.

On the 13th July 2020 we reopened the Bev-ridge café. It has a different look about it with our bubbles and extended outdoor seating and we have enjoyed welcoming all our customers old and new this summer. If you would like to book an afternoon tea visit our Bev-ridge Facebook page for latest information on how to book a table and the latest menu.

If you have any queries as we return to college sites regarding welfare or support, please contact Mel or Sharon at any time.

Melanie Atkin, Head of College - 07950389874

Sharon McCusker, Transitions, Data and Pastoral Manager- 07429943136

The college offices are closed to visitors without a pre-booked appointment but reception is open for any general queries by calling 01302 897445.

The message from the government is constantly being updated with regards health and education. I will continue to review the strategy for the college’s delivery of education for the next academic year in order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our staff, learners and families. Any changes in our approach this next year will be detailed on our website. If I can ask that everyone refer to the site for the latest news.

The new term will be a challenging one I’m sure. Even when faced with unforeseen challenges, we have shown that by working together we can achieve so much more as ‘Team Ridge’, which includes staff, learners, parents, directors and supporters of the college.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to make sites ready for this week’s reopening and for everyone’s patience as the impact of COVID-19 delayed certain aspects of our planning. I wish you all a safe return to college and look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Best wishes

Melanie Atkin

Head of College

Director