

Information for staff -

Absences and Pay (18/03/20)

The RCS is keen to take whatever measures it can to ensure that it supports staff to minimise the spread of viral outbreaks and to promote wellbeing during this period of heightened stress. On this basis, the CSMT has agreed the following, in order to alleviate concerns and provide clarity wherever possible:

Staff presenting with illness:

Any staff presenting with symptoms similar to those of Covid19 will be asked to refrain from attending work and should follow the most recent guidance available-link.

Building closure:

Following the Prime Minister's and Scotland's First Minister's recent briefings the decision has been taken to **close the RCS campus** buildings from 4PM on Friday. Up to that point the building will be open on a restricted hours basis of 10am to 4pm. We believe this time should be used to collect necessary equipment to move to an online footing and for staff to prepare for and ask advice on use of Microsoft Teams for teaching and for meetings.

The closure will be until further notice.

Although it is hoped that the closure period will be limited, we must take into account the government and NHS advice before any re-opening. It is likely, taking into account current advice that the closure may be for a period of up to 12 weeks.

We will keep staff advised of any updates on this but it is wise to plan for this eventuality.

The following guidance is therefore based on a contingency of a longer closure than originally anticipated.

Remote working:

Full time, pro rata and part time staff will be asked to work remotely from 21st March onwards.

Guidance will be given by managers and by health and safety on the details of how to work remotely. See also our health and safety guidance:

<https://portal.rcs.ac.uk/health-safety>

It is anticipated that staff will be able to work and keep in touch with RCS business and with colleagues via such applications as Microsoft Teams etc.

Where staff are working remotely during the period of closure, they should liaise with their manager to agree what they can reasonably provide in terms of work, and assist in the prioritisation of activities. This may be on a reduced hours or flexible hours basis.

Many staff will be new to remote working and we ask that staff deliver what is practicable by remote methods. If they are unable to so we ask that they use the time productively to enhance their on-line skills, undertake the on line training available, catch up on planning and anticipated work etc. This should be agreed with your line manager during the closure period.

Where staff are unable to work due to primary caring responsibilities or due to their role being unsuitable for remote working, staff will receive their normal pay (see below). On their return to work, a meeting will take place with their manager to discuss how best to catch up on the work. This could include agreeing whether some or any missed hours could be worked over an agreed period, where possible. Advice will be available from HR on a case by case basis.

If a staff member were absent due to ill-health prior to the period of closure commencing and becomes fit to attend work, but is unable to do so because of the closure of the building, this will be treated as exceptional and the staff member will receive full pay, provided that communications with HR have taken place via email / phone.

#### Payment:

The Principal is keen to ensure that staff have the certainty of receiving their normal pay for the remainder of this academic year and has given that assurance.

The RCS will therefore guarantee normal pay to staff until the end of this financial and annual leave year. (31<sup>st</sup> July).

It will be the case that there will be no carry forward of annual leave into the 2020/21 leave year, so staff should ensure that they use their leave entitlement before 31<sup>st</sup> July. There will be some pre-arranged and already specifically approved carry forward of leave by exception.

Please direct any queries to [humanresources@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:humanresources@rcs.ac.uk)

The RCS assures staff that they will receive their normal pay as follows:

#### Normal pay

That is defined as pay for work which is scheduled for delivery in this academic year.

For part time staff this will include one to one lessons and programme delivery which has been agreed and scheduled. Staff who operate with time sheets should complete them as normal and have their heads of department sign them off for payment. This sign off can be by email. During the period of closure we would ask all part time staff to complete time sheets to ensure that accurate payment is made. If timesheets are not completed payroll will pay on the basis of the scheduled hours. The working assumption is that lessons will be delivered on line or that work in relation to future planning, preparation, up skilling takes place.

Holiday pay will be paid as normal in April and July.

Any adjustments of over/underpayment will be made when the building re-opens.

For staff who are already contracted to undertake fee paid work during the period of closure the RCS will pay in full for work which has been contracted and is scheduled to commence before 1<sup>st</sup> April.

For staff who are already contracted to commence after 1<sup>st</sup> April a percentage of 50% of the fee will be processed in lieu of the work being undertaken, unless the work can be undertaken in full remotely.

For staff who are contracted to work on short courses in the Easter break, these classes are now cancelled and the payment of 50% of the fee due to cancellation will also apply.

Please note that the cancellation fee will only be applied to the contracts that are signed and returned to the HR department prior to 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Please note that the RCS is doing its best to ensure that staff are paid during this enforced closure but that the loss of revenue on planned courses will have a severe effect on our future finances.

If you have any individual questions, please contact HR for advice.  
[humanresources@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:humanresources@rcs.ac.uk)

Additional assistance:

HMRC

HMRC has set up a help line specifically for the self-employed and businesses who will be struggling now due to the current situation.

The Coronavirus helpline: 0300 456 3565

The helpline will give you advice on your tax and any benefits.

## Banks

Many banks are offering mortgage and loan 'holiday periods' to individuals' who have been affected financially by cessation of work / reduced work due to coronavirus.