



Unlocking libraries - CoLRiC Guidance for post lockdown reopening

There has been extensive discussion and speculation in the media about schools reopening in June, generating many questions about how we can prepare for the relaxation of the lockdown to facilitate this. CoLRiC members have used our private JiscMail forum to share approaches to ensuring the safe and smooth reopening of learning spaces and services.

Every College is unique, with its own local issues and challenges. Some will be considering a staggered re-opening, for example, and will not want to hurry along a process that may be detrimental to the health and well-being of staff and students.

CoLRiC's primary concern is to share best practice and offer support and guidance during this difficult time. The document is for information and discussion only and does not constitute a policy. It has evolved out of the conversations that our members have been having on the JiscMail forum. Members have raised concerns, shared ideas and asked questions. For your convenience, we have captured this information and collated it with valuable advice and information from external sources.

This will be a dynamic document, updated and recirculated on a regular basis. This first iteration is by no means exhaustive. It will evolve as members share their experiences and stories of what has worked and what hasn't. The strength of CoLRiC is that we are a learning and sharing community so please keep the discussions going and do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information.

Key topics

Getting stock back to the library

Libraries and Learning Resource Services have thousands of pounds worth of stock in the hands of students. How can we ensure that issued items are returned to us, especially items that have been issued to students who may not be returning to college or whose courses have finished this academic year? Are there ways to motivate students to return items? Questions have also



been raised about the value of the issued stock, and whether covering postage costs makes economic sense. Options being considered by members include:

- No fines – and ensuring major publicity about the no-fine policy
- Extend book due dates
- Drop boxes are useful for local students
- Pre-paid labels/envelopes to ensure return
- Explore the relative costs of a courier service
- Assess the value of your outstanding stock and estimate the costs of ensuring its safe return
- Explore the creation of drop off points at local businesses
- Tweak overdue reminder system to keep students informed of ways to return items.

Resource return and quarantining items

What are the best ways to safely manage returned items?

- Set up designated hotspots/hot areas
- Limit the number of staff who have access to hot areas
- Provide different return bins for different days
- Set up a rota of boxes/trolleys
- Clear labelling on trolleys with date it was moved to designated quarantine area
- Institute a quarantine system – 72 hours seems to be the accepted norm
- Remove and replace plastic book jackets
- Staff to wear gloves
- Staff to interact minimally with other staff during their shift in returns area

Counter/desk duties

What processes and guidelines can we set up to ensure that our staff stay safe at desk shifts?

- Design staff rota carefully – only one person on desk duty at a time
- No sharing of workstations during desk shifts
- Staff to wash hands and sanitise before and after desk shift

- Provide guidance on wiping the work area/mouse/telephone handset etc. to ensure it is clean for the next shift. Also, provide the wipes (and refer to the section on glove etiquette below)
- No money handling. Consider withdrawing services that involve the exchange of cash, or offer them for free
- Enforce a strict 'no waiting zone' at the front desk area – and other open areas
- No lending of stationery – if items are lent, the student gets to keep them!

Issuing physical resources

What new processes can be put in place to ensure that resources are issued as safely as possible? The ideas considered include:

- For colleges that do not have self-service terminals and use hand scanners, staff should focus on not handling books or student ID card. Ask the student to open book, hold ID card etc.
- Books to be issued by reservation only. There will be no student browsing and LRC staff will collect items from shelves for issuing
- Provide no hardcopy issuing at all. Instead, promote digital, online resources and Borrowbox to students
- Provide 'click and collect' reservation services

Social distancing (aka crowd control)

A major concern for our members is how they can manage numbers of users in the space and how to maintain social distances. “How do we stop users coming in their usual social groups?” “How do we manage lunch and breaktime rushes?”

- Remove some of the PCs, keyboards, mice
- Remove soft furniture
- Two users to a table if big enough
- Establish a one-way system and limit two-way traffic on stairways
- Limit the number of people allowed in – staff member required to manage this
- Temporary closure of some areas
- Limit length of visit

- Consider how to manage congestion points
- Provide priority access for certain groups
- Tape distancing lines on the floor

Services to students

What services should be suspended for now and how can others be maintained but managed differently? For example, can we continue to issue laptops via a self-service unit? What should be done about providing access to, and managing queues at, printers and photocopiers? Members also discussed whether, now that students have been without them for weeks, there might be a decrease in demand for printing and photocopying services.

- Establish a cleaning schedule for items such as laptops
- Stop issuing laptops etc. – or make it clear ‘at own risk’?
- Provide hand sanitizer stations at self-checkout
- Encourage use of mobile apps to issue and self-check-out where available
- Only one person at printer/photocopier at a time
- Encourage social distancing at these items by using taped lines on floors

General staff duties

How can we ensure our colleagues work as safely as possible?

- Remind staff of ‘no touching your face’ guidelines
- Also remind them of ‘glove etiquette’
- No hot desking - assigned seating
- Design a rota that means people only work in certain areas or on certain days, so teams don’t meet
- Design a rota that balances at-home work with onsite work
- Offer staggered start/finish times
- Consider closing communal facilities (such as the kitchen)

General cleaning of spaces and PPE

What rules and guidelines can we set in place on the correct use of protective gear and maintaining the cleanliness of our spaces? Will our college provide us with protective wear or are we expecting our colleagues to provide our own? Will we require our students to wear masks?

- Set up a cleaning schedule and ensure all staff participate appropriately
- Provide facilities – and guidance – on effective hand washing and hand hygiene
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout the space?
- Require students to clean PC after use
- Clean PCs and desks between uses – staff or student responsibility
- Deny all use of PCs – or make clear it is at own risk
- All students to place bags on floors and not on desks

Other practical tips

- Staff who wear glasses and put them on and off frequently need to be very conscious of this. Wherever possible try to keep your glasses in one position.
- Minimal mobile phone use while at work
- Encourage frequent and effective hand-washing/use of hand sanitiser

Glove etiquette

Managers should provide guidance on the effective use of gloves. Remind colleagues that gloves are only useful if they do not touch you or your face, your pocket, or your phone

- After each shift and before breaks keep your gloves on. Spray them with disinfectant then spray down your workstation and wipe after ten seconds with paper towel
- Wipe trolley handles that you have used with disinfectant-soaked paper towel. Then you can remove your gloves
- Take the gloves off and wash/sanitise your hands before touching any other items, including yourself. It is important to take gloves off correctly, so the outside of the glove does not touch your skin
- Dispose of used gloves carefully in a rubbish bin



Sources of information

This checklist for reopening libraries is a great general resource – you can download it as a PDF [Australian libraries responding to COVID-19: Checklist for reopening libraries](#)

This blog post on [Managing Returned Material](#) has been circulated and recommended by our members, as has [this post from School Library Journal](#)

[CILIP Coronavirus Information Service](#)

[CILIP COVID-19 Guidance for School Libraries](#)

[UNISON COVID-19 advice for FE staff](#)

About CoLRiC

For over twenty-five years CoLRiC has been the voice of Further Education and Sixth Form College Libraries and Learning Resource Services; a diverse group representing the interests of colleagues in organisations across the UK.

CoLRiC influences the development of quality assurance standards through assessment, accreditation and benchmarking. It also provides opportunities for professional development via its annual conference, encouraging networking and the exchange of ideas across its membership.

CoLRiC members have access to a portfolio of publications and resources. These include:

- A regular PDF copy of our e-newsletter CoLRiC Impact that showcases exemplary practice and innovation
- A collection of exemplar documents that highlight good practice across the sector
- Access to our JISCMail private email discussion forum where they can network with other CoLRiC members
- Eligibility to register for our prestigious Peer Accreditation Scheme to determine the value, impact and quality of their service and raise its profile across the organisation
- Eligibility to submit nominations for CoLRiC's prestigious Best Practice and Jeff Cooper Inspirational Information Professional of the Year Awards
- Eligibility for discounted rates to attend our annual conference.

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