St George's Covid-19 check-in questionnaire for team meetings and one to ones – results

Summary

From 23 June 2020 - 22 July 2020 St George's undertook a short staff questionnaire to check-in on views around its reaction to the Covid-19 crisis. The intention was that the questionnaire was discussed at team meetings so that managers were engaging with their staff on how they were feeling about the situation and the information they were receiving.

In total 192 responses were received to the questionnaire. Some responses were provided on behalf of a team, others were done by individuals.
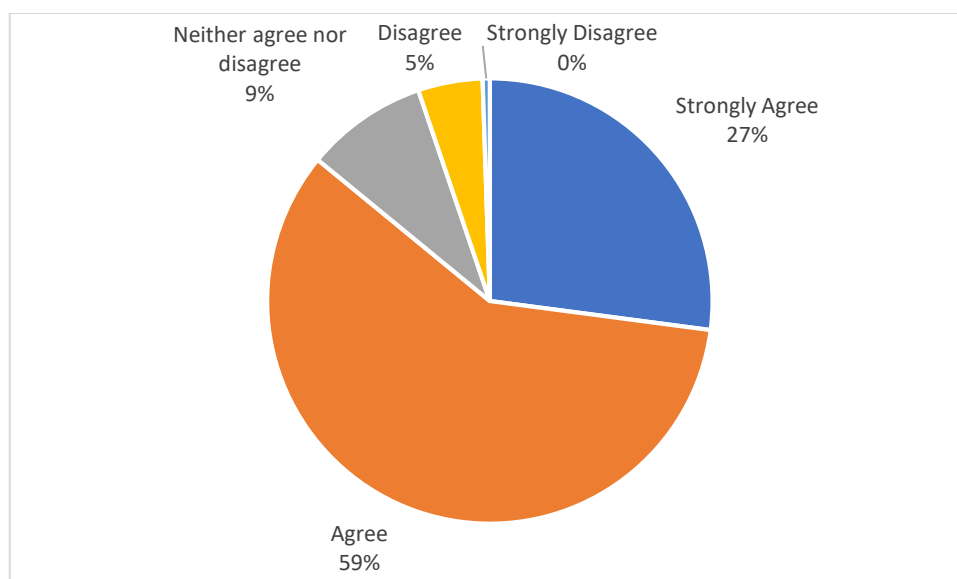
In general, the majority of respondents were positive about St George's approach and communication during the crisis and their ability to work remotely, where appropriate. However, many were missing face-to-face interaction with colleagues.

Nevertheless, there are areas where St George's can continue to improve, for example in communicating in a timely fashion, keeping staff up to date on the progress of the return to site project, ensuring staff feel that their views are being considered and enabling individuals to access IT/office equipment.

Questionnaire Results

The following summarises the results per question.

1. Communication from St George's has been helpful to the individuals/the team in understanding what we need to do in response to Covid-19 e.g. safety and wellness guidance, access to support, when to stay home, working from home practices.
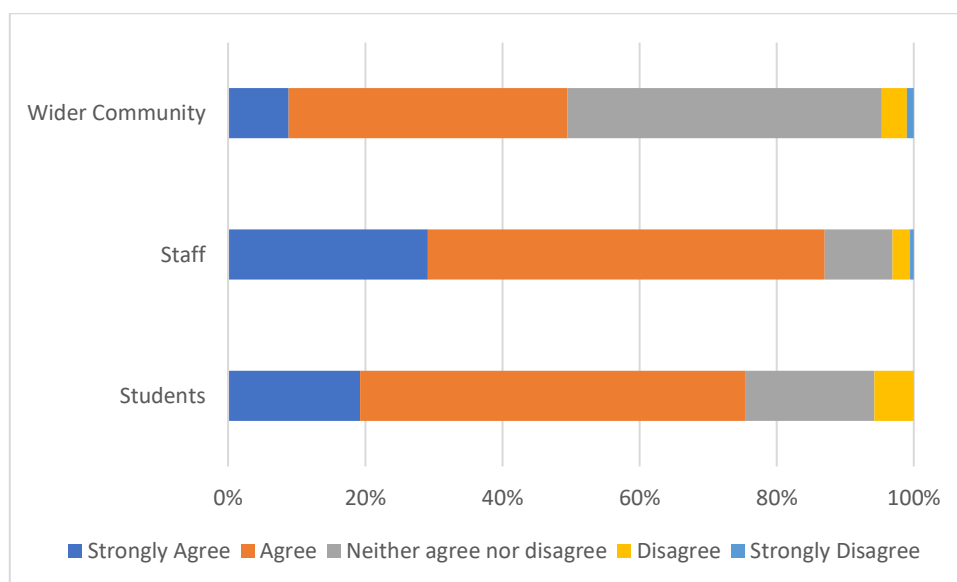

2. Please tell us more about your area of concern - if the response the previous question is negative.

    In general respondents were positive but a few areas of concern were highlighted:

- Lack of clarity over return to site, eg provide dates for return for professional services staff
- Comms good on the big picture issues but less helpful on the practicalities eg working from home practices, support for carers/parents, equipment (including to facilitate online teaching).
- Good comms centrally (eg from the Principal), less so from local management.
- Quite long/wordy – comms could have been more bite sized or visual.
- Have to be proactive to find all of the comms and not clear when comms on the website has been updated as the main page remains unchanged.
- Lack of communication to PhD students.
- Some decision making seemed to occur late, eg regarding working from home in the run up to lockdown and allowing additional leave carry over.

3. The team feel informed about the actions which the University is taking to respond to Covid-19 in relation to:


4. Please tell us more about your concern - if any of the responses to the previous questions are negative.

   Some of the concerns highlighted were similar to those outlined in question 2:

   - Good communication to undergraduates, less so to research students.
   - Not sure what the "wider community" refers to.
   - Department specific updates would be helpful, eg in relation to which phase of the return to site staff were part of.
   - More information on return to site, eg timing, whether phased and whether some working from home to be continued.
   - Have to read George's Weekly to stay informed, if not in the habit of doing so some information lost.
   - Some information not filtering down from senior management, eg extent to which teaching will be online from September and approach to assessments.
   - Staff not kept well enough informed about what being said to students and therefore can't answer their questions. Has been some improvement.
   - Communication about students clearer than that for staff.
   - Communication too slow.

5. I/we feel informed about the team's goals and priorities when working remotely?
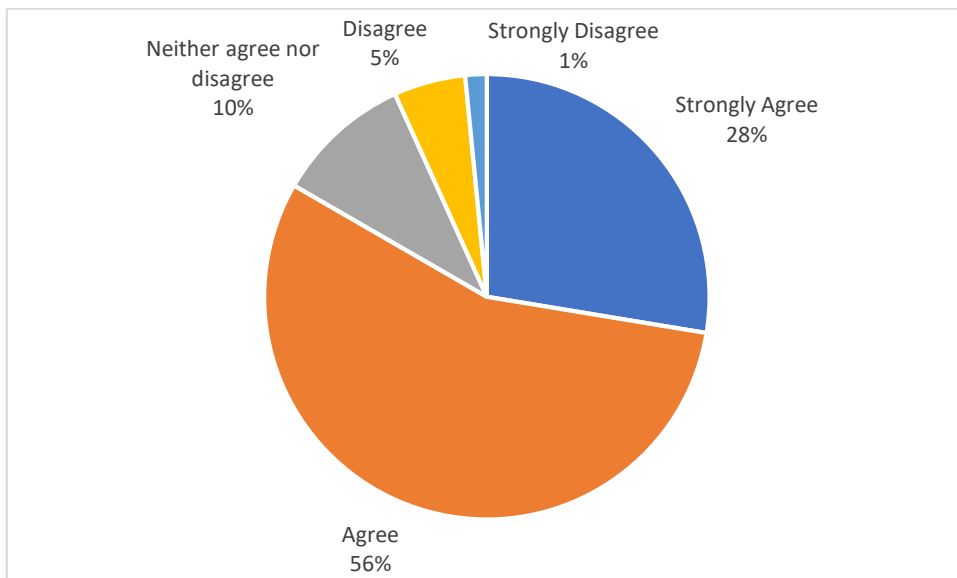
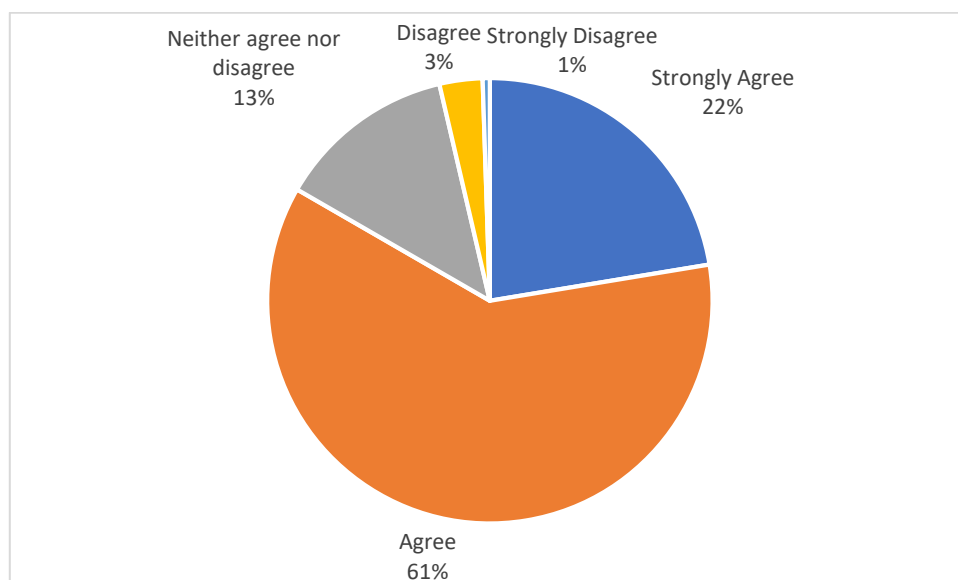6. I feel/we feel connected to my/the team when working remotely?
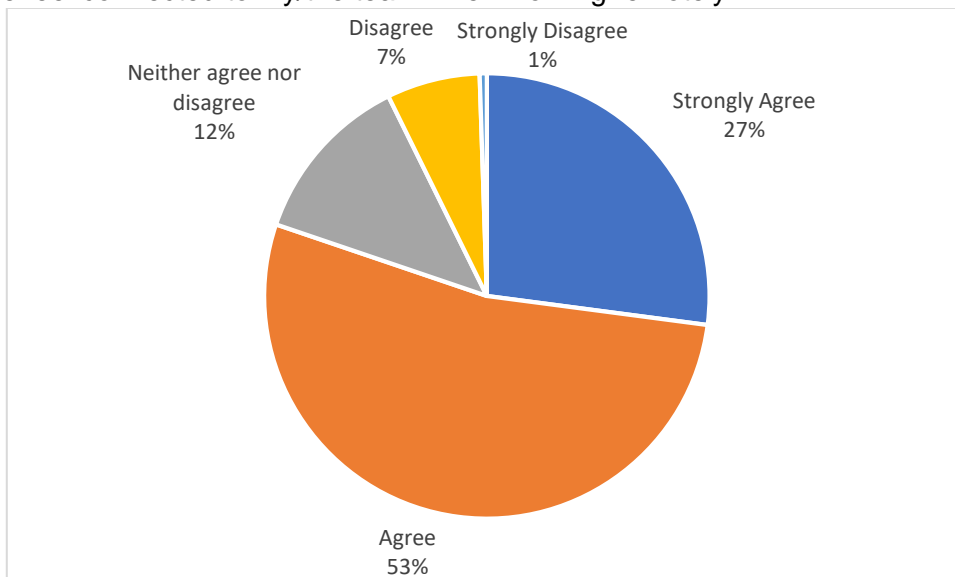
7. How are you, your colleagues or your team feeling about the current working arrangements?
   - Generally working as well as it can.
   - Some support services not as easy to access.
   - Missing social contact and "corridor chats".
   - Some feelings of isolation.
   - Some would welcome being onsite occasionally.
   - More productive and enjoying greater flexibility.
   - Managing a team remotely more difficult.
   - Much harder if have children at home.
   - Some people feeling stressed.
   - Additional work which is making work/life balance harder to manage.
   - Some IT issues, especially to start.

- Need more meetings remotely to maintain contact.
- Making it work but not perfect.
- More sedentary.
- Not always sure how to access equipment.

Many of the answers to this question are possibly summed up by the following response "My team and I miss the personal interaction, but enjoy the greater flexibility and lack of commute offered from working at home."

8. What challenges have affected you and your team's ability to work remotely? The response can include self-theming, e.g. : • Using the technology • Not physically seeing their colleagues • Not physically seeing their students/staff/key stakeholders • Balancing home and working life • Other
    - Some positives eg lack of commute and flexibility. Microsoft Teams has helped with keeping in contact.
    - Not seeing people (including students).
    - Poor home working set up and IT issues (eg drives not being available)
    - Less distinction between home and work.
    - Childcare.
    - Increased workload.

9. I/we know where to go for support regarding my/our health, safety and wellbeing, e.g. Covid 19 FAQs for Health and Safety, employee assistance resources, counselling, wellbeing support?

Pie chart showing: Neither agree nor disagree 13%, Disagree 3%, Strongly Disagree 1%, Strongly Agree 22%, Agree 61%.

10. I am/We are confident that St George's will continue to take the right steps to see us through the Coronavirus outbreak
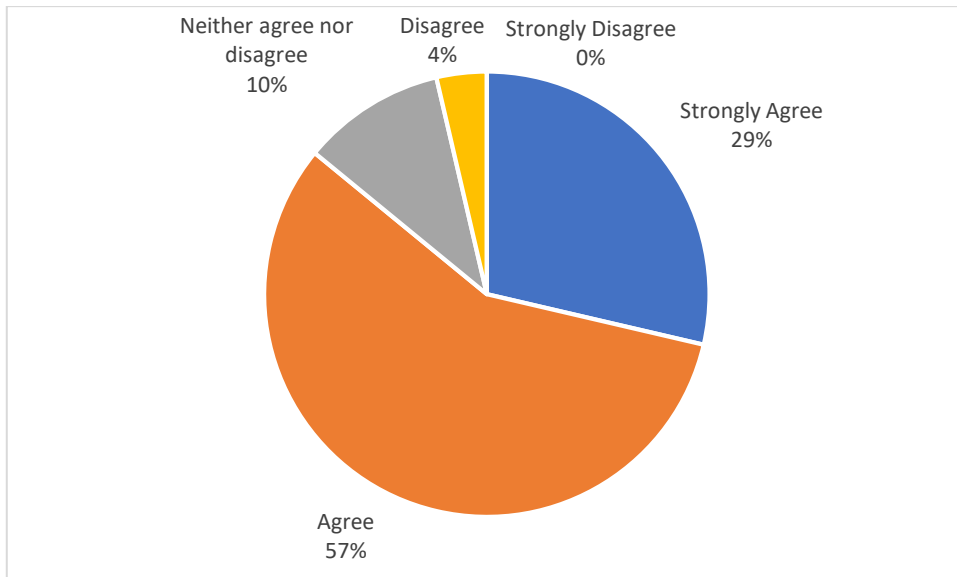
11. I/We believe that we are now well able to continue working remotely (where appropriate) for at least the medium term.
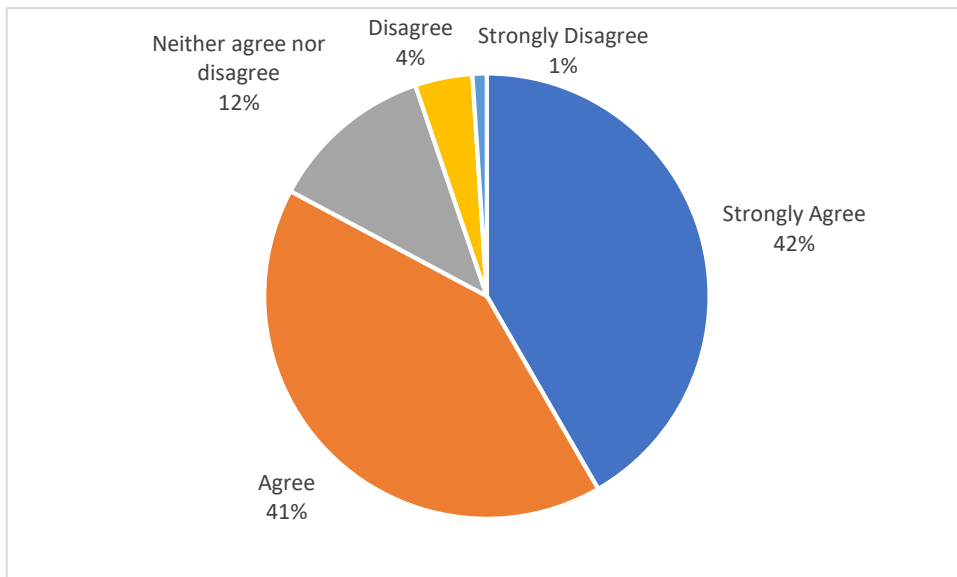

12. What one additional thing could St George's do to support you during this period?

There were a number of different answers to this question. The majority covered the following areas:

- Occasional onsite working.
- Quicker relay of information from senior management.
- Additional IT or office equipment/better access to drives.
- Additional leave carry over.
- Parking facilities.

- Additional advice for staff with childcare responsibilities.
- A no meeting day.
- Consideration of working from home as a longer term option.
- Recognition of extra workload.
- Nothing additional required.

13. We/I feel that our/my views are being heard and considered in decisions about how we will be working in the future.
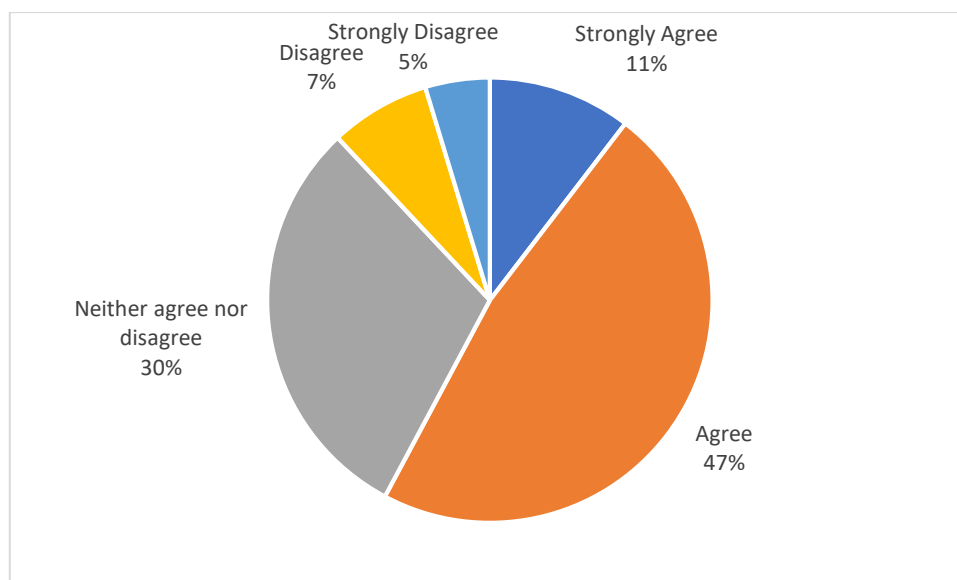

14. What are the main barriers that the team see in employees returning to work onsite? The response can include self-theming, e.g.: -In an at-risk group -Childcare -Other care responsibilities -Commute/travel arrangements -Social distancing in work -Availability of PPE -Shift patterns

The list below summarises the most common responses:

- Commute/travel arrangements.
- Childcare.
- Lack of clarity on the timing of phase 4.
- H&S at work, eg ensuring social distancing, will cleaning occur regularly enough especially in communal areas.
- Availability of PPE.
- Proximity to hospital and potential additional risks this brings (both in terms of spreading the virus and catching it).
- Being in a higher risk group or living with somebody who is.
- Using lifts and social distancing – not everybody can use the stairs.
- Lack of ventilation in some offices.

15. I trust St George's leaders to take appropriate safety measures before allowing employees to return to the University?
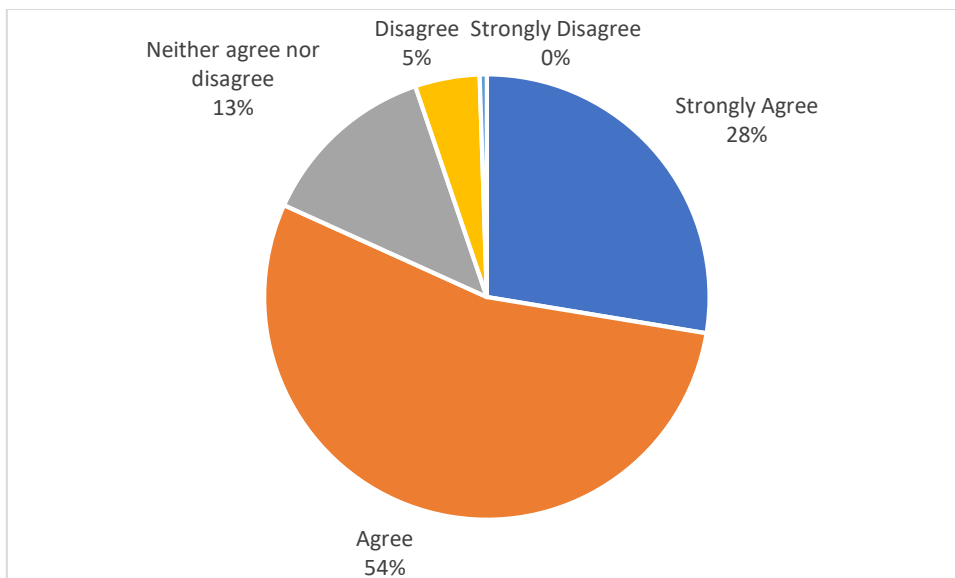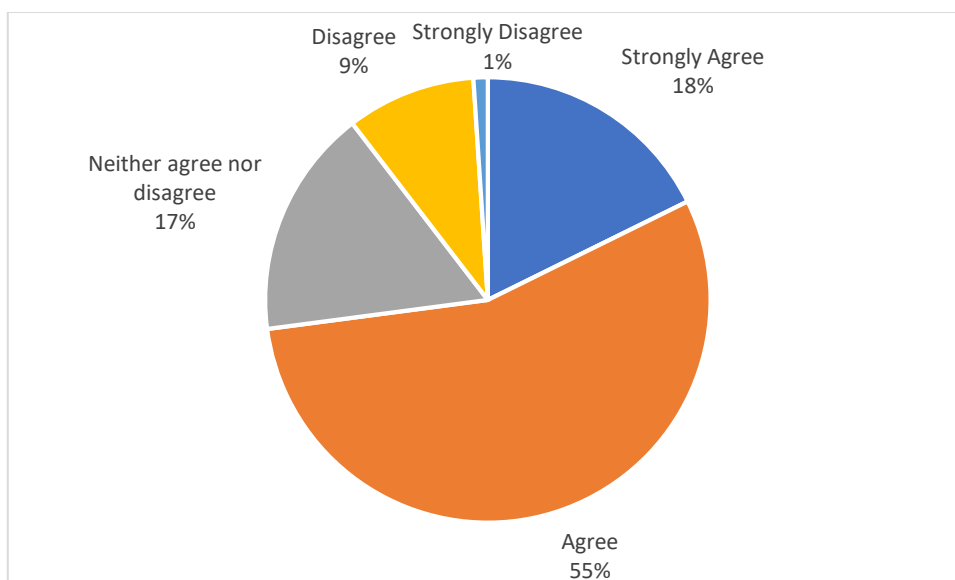
16. Please tell us more about your concern - if the response to the previous question is negative.
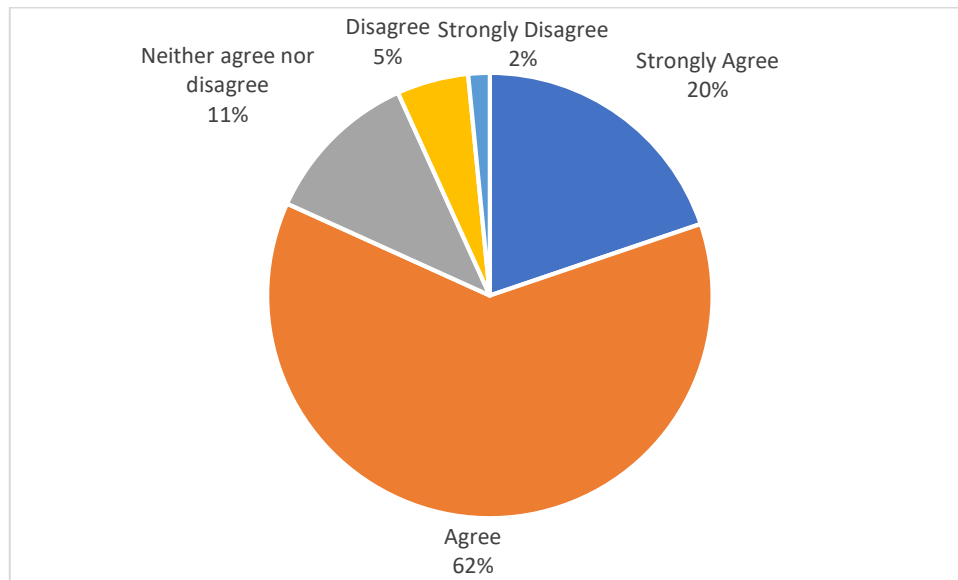
   There were only 32 responses to this question covering some of the following areas:

   - Need to balance staff safety with student needs.
   - Relies on everybody acting responsibly.
   - Sanitisers for multiuser printer/photocopiers
   - Lack of confidence that sanitiser and cleaning will be kept at required levels.
   - More signs.
   - No concern.

17. We/I feel that we/I'm being kept well informed about what to expect in terms of returning to work onsite. I/we are aware of the SGUL Return to site plan and the 4 phases, and know which phase would apply to me?

18. If staff have a concern about returning to work onsite, they know how to raise it.

Pie chart showing:
- Strongly Agree 20%
- Agree 62%
- Neither agree nor disagree 11%
- Disagree 5%
- Strongly Disagree 2%

19. Please tell us more about your concern - if the response to the previous question is negative.

There were 30 responses to this question which covered the following:

- Not clear on Phase 4/when administrative staff are expected to return.
- Not sure how a concern would be dealt with, eg would raise with manager but how is it escalated.
- Not aware of return to site plans/how to raise a concern.

20. What's one process or practice that you would like to see continued when we return to the workplace?

Almost all respondents answered this question and the most commonly cited responses were:

- Ongoing use of remote working and meetings, eg only attend the office 2/3 days per week (by far the most common response).
- Ongoing communication, eg from the Principal and Senior Management team.
- Online assessments/marking.
- Paperless processes.
- Higher hygiene standards/social distancing.