

September 2011

To parents of A1 and Intermediate Programme (IP) students

Dear Parent/Guardian

A warm welcome to BHASVIC! It is especially a pleasure to extend a greeting to you as a new or 'returning' parent in another year of excellent exam results for the College. Our pass rates at A and AS level this year were 98% and 92% respectively. Our vocational qualification results were also very good with several subjects achieving 100% pass rates.

Your son or daughter is joining a very good College. At our last inspection, Ofsted identified our Key Strengths as:

- Outstanding student achievement
- Outstanding leadership and management fully engaging all staff in the College mission
- Strong culture of quality improvement focusing on students' achievement
- Carefully designed and inclusive curriculum
- Strong support for individual students
- Rigorous monitoring of students' performance
- Outstanding governance

The Inspectors identified as Areas for Improvement:

- Structure and content of group tutorials
- Enrichment of the curriculum through wider employment links
- Co-ordination of actions to promote equality and diversity across the curriculum

Work on these areas is well under way. You can read the full report by following the links at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Following the publication of the Ofsted Report, BHASVIC was awarded Beacon in July 2008. The award recognises BHASVIC's national status as a Beacon of outstanding achievement.

College Expectations

Beginning their course of study in a sixth form college is always an exciting but demanding experience for students and at BHASVIC we take a great deal of care to ensure that they settle as quickly as possible.

Please inform us if you require this letter in an alternative format



Equally, we believe that it is important that you, as parents, are well informed about the College so that you can participate as effectively as possible in your son or daughter's education. Useful and important information is available to be viewed on the Parents' Information pages on the College website. You can view these by visiting: <http://www.bhasvic.ac.uk/parents.htm>. I am enclosing with this letter the following information:

- The Parents' Calendar
- Parental Expectations of the College
- The leaflet "What to do if you are absent from College"
- Student Attendance and Key Dates for 2011-12 to put on your family notice board
- Student timetables
- Parents' Fund Letter
- Attendance Hotline Fridge Magnet

The following information can be accessed from the website (alternatively please contact Susanne Bonney on Ext: 5824 (direct line 01273 859824) to receive a paper copy):

- The College Charter
- The College Contract
- Coursework deadlines
- Dates for January exams

These documents will tell you about what BHASVIC expects from students; the undertaking which the College gives to them and to you; and how you will be informed about your son or daughter's progress.

In order to encourage students to be independent and responsible, our first point of contact for discussions about students' progress is the students themselves. You will see from the Parents' Calendar that there are opportunities for you to meet with College staff to hear how your son or daughter is getting on and to ask any questions you may have. We do, however, also understand that between the ages of 16 and 19 young people are not always at their most communicative! If you have a concern about how things are going and would appreciate clarification or reassurance, then please ring the College and ask to speak to your son or daughter's Tutor.

In case you were unable to attend any of the Introductory Evenings for New Parents, here are the key issues that were discussed:

We expect our students to behave with consideration for themselves and others:

- Students should be active in their studies and seek out wider opportunities to continue learning their subjects (web, literature, media etc).
- Students should put in at least 3 hours of private study on average (i.e. outside the classroom) per AS Level; BTEC Course or GCSE subject per week and double or triple that for respective courses. This can be within or outside the College.
- Students must follow the correct procedure if they are absent.
- Students must arrive on time at lessons and meet deadlines for homework and coursework.
- Students must attend all timetabled commitments including tutorials.
- We encourage students to make the most of their time at College, by participating in 'Enrichment' opportunities such as music, drama, sport, College trips, talks etc.
- The College offers a range of support mechanisms including 'Subject Extensions' (when staff are timetabled to deal with students who need help with particular aspects of a course) and an effective pastoral system.
- We permit students to smoke in a restricted location within the College grounds, but discourage them from doing so.

- We expect students to treat others as they would hope to be treated themselves.
- We hope that parents will support the College by encouraging their son or daughter to form good study habits and to let us know if there are reasons why a student might be having problems.

If you have cause for concern – Contact the College by e-mail, telephone or letter. In the case of a phone call, Reception will try to find your son or daughter's Tutor or Senior Tutor. If neither is available, they will take a message for a Tutor and someone will return your call or put you through to leave a message on the Senior Tutor's Telephone.

Reporting and Assessment – Reviews take place at intervals throughout the year to monitor student progress. Subject teachers and Tutors will discuss progress with students formally twice a year in the form of Subject Reviews. These are sent home at the end of the process and we ask you to discuss them with your son or daughter. The timing of Subject Reviews is set out in the Parents' Calendar.

Parents' Evenings – Please see the enclosed Calendar for the times and dates of Parents' Evenings throughout the year.

Attendance – We expect 100% attendance from students and all absences are pursued vigorously. Students should be available for individual appointments, given appropriate notice, with members of staff throughout the College day. If attendance at lessons or tutor periods falls below 90%, without good reason, students will be charged £50 towards their assessment costs and risk being asked to leave the College.

Students must not take holidays during term time – Holidays in term time are always treated as unauthorised absence. It is a requirement for students who wish to progress into a second year to have full attendance in the period after the AS exams. Please note that any holiday taken during this time will jeopardise progression and may mean a student is not allowed to return to BHASVIC.

Absence – For details of what to do in case of absence please consult the enclosed leaflet "What to do if you are absent from College". The enclosed fridge magnet details the absence hotline number, the absence text number and the absence e-mail address.

Part-time work – This can be a real threat to students' success, as can an over-active social life. Most students keep paid work in check so that this activity has no detrimental effect on their College performance. Evidence suggests that students who do more than the equivalent of one day's paid work a week will severely hinder their chances of success in their studies.

Careers Guidance – Students will discuss their career plans with their tutor during tutorials. We have a good Careers Library to which students have free access and a Careers Assistant who will help students with their queries. All students can request a careers interview by making an appointment in the Careers Suite, within the Student Services Centre.

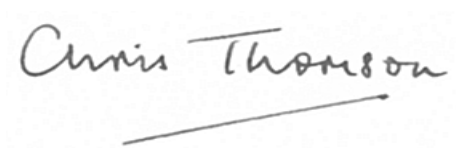
Higher Education – The process to help your son or daughter with decisions and plans for after BHASVIC begins for students in March. We hold a Higher Education Information Evening for parents, also in March. Students are given help with their UCAS applications during tutor periods in the Summer Term and throughout the Autumn term of the second year. There are tight deadlines for UCAS and FE College applications in particular, so please ensure your son or daughter is aware of these.

Disability Equality – We keep our processes for promoting the wellbeing of people with disabilities under constant review. To this end we would be very interested in hearing from any parent who has experience of caring for a disabled person – however mild the disability – so that we can learn from them and thereby improve our provision. If you would be willing to help us, please contact Nicky Deakin on 01273 859816.

Edutext – The College uses a text messaging service called ‘Edutext’ to alert parents to their son or daughter’s unauthorised absence or important meetings they have with their staff. We feel it is very important to be able to communicate with you in this way, and hope you will respond to any texts in a timely manner.

I trust the contents of this letter will give you some initial answers to questions which you may have had in mind. Finally, I hope you will read the enclosed sheet headed “**Parents Fund**” and that you will want to assist the College’s work with a donation. Thank you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Thomson". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background. Below the signature, there is a horizontal line that starts under the first part of the name and extends to the right, ending under the last part of the name.

Christopher Thomson
Principal