



16 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

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### **Executive Summary**

There are additional confirmed cases of Coronavirus at BHASVIC. We are tightening our measures around distancing and face coverings. Students must ensure they maintain a distance of 1m+ at all times. If they cannot do this they must wear a face covering, including outside and always during transition. This applies to all areas of BHASVIC (unless an individual is exempt). We have put in place carefully constructed control measures but we need students to adhere to them or we will have to take additional measures that will be more drastic and that will have a negative impact on the learning experience. We are appealing to you to have a serious conversation with your young person about this.

### **Coronavirus cases**

To date, six students who attended Welcome Day alone have now tested positive. They and their close contacts are isolating. There are also 4 cases we know of where students have tested positive but they have not been on site. There are clear links between these cases to a single source which was an 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September. There is no evidence of any transmission at college amongst our 3,150 students.

Yesterday I was on a conference call with Public Health England and the Director of Public Health for Brighton & Hove City Council to assess the situation. They do not recommend that we change any of our key preventative measures at this moment in time but will continue to monitor the situation.

Nevertheless, as a Senior Management Team we are aware that not all measures around social distancing are working as effectively as we would like and we need to react, ensuring our response is precautionary and proportionate, under continuous review and with the ability to escalate with PHE support.

### **Current Preventative measures**

We're now half way through the first week of teaching to our two-thirds capacity timetable model. Students have navigated this brilliantly and we know we will refine our delivery as time progresses. This measure allows us to distance students 1m apart in classrooms with staff keeping 2m away. It is our key tactic to reducing transmission. Whilst students have navigated this well, it is clear that not all measures onsite are as effective as we want them to be and we must work together to help establish good routines with students.

There are two main areas of concern:

- Lack of Social Distancing in unmanaged areas
- Not all students wearing face coverings in transition and outside when distancing isn't maintained

We are therefore taking action to address this with immediate effect by:

- Introducing 'Covid Marshalls' to monitor distancing and the wearing of face coverings especially in our Piazza area
- Students need to be 1+m apart or wear a face covering, including outside whilst onsite (unless exempt)
- Teachers will be more proactive about ensuring students leave classes with face coverings on
- It is at the discretion of students as to whether they wear a face covering in lessons, but I would encourage students to consider this carefully.

### **Future mitigation measures**

Introducing these additional measures is our first additional step to the considerable planning and risk assessing that has taken place to date. We will keep this under constant review and will move to a Plan B if it isn't effective. Future steps might be to only allow students onsite for lessons or to spend time in a centrally managed space (library, hall, sports hall). What we have constructed to maximise learning with our two-thirds capacity model is at risk and we do not want to jeopardise this.

### **Public Health Messaging**

Our tag line with students is 'Minimise Transmission>Maximise Learning>Keep BHASVIC Open'. We want to impress on them that if virus cases grow exponentially we will be back to remote learning and none of us wants this – least of all students themselves! We must help them to join the dots. Outside of college it is important that students and households adhere to the 'Rule of 6'. Whilst we are working hard to ensure students are compliant with distancing measures onsite, it is important that they maintain these behaviours offsite too.



## **Close contacts**

Public Health will isolate individuals who have:

- had touch contact with a confirmed case
- been within 1 metre for 1 minute or more or
- been within 2 metres for 15 minutes or more.

We have isolated students who fall into these measures from the known cases from seating plans in lessons but we have no jurisdiction over who students are in contact with in unmanaged areas of the college and beyond. It is important that students are able to recall this – but if distancing has been maintained there is no need!

## **Finally**

We are able to amend our timetable delivery model quickly in response to the number of cases and in consultation with PHE. We keep these measures under daily review. We're in uncharted territory and juggling competing and sometimes incompatible demands. We will continue to make decisions using our best judgements and by following advice. The underlying measure to protect us all is social distancing at all times and to wash or sanitise hands regularly. All other measures in place should complement this. Can I thank you in advance for talking to your young person about this and helping to reinforce key messages.

I'm risk averse and will escalate our mitigation measures if necessary, which will unfortunately mean less learning will take place onsite. We are able to amend our timetable delivery model quickly in response to the number of cases and in consultation with PHE. We keep these measures under daily review.

We've worked incredibly hard to make this current model work – it provides the best balance – this can work with your help.

Further information is available on our website FAQs section.

Yours sincerely,

William Baldwin