



7 January 2022

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year and welcome back. The first week back has been smoother than at times I imagined it might be and it is miles away from the disruption of this time last year. However, it hasn't all been plain sailing.

## **Covid**

As has been widely reported in the media, staff absence is having an impact on provision here like it is elsewhere. We are running at about 10% staff absence at the moment with some departments seeing up to 50% of staff off. We have limited staff to provide full cover but we will try to ensure that we communicate effectively with students and encourage them to keep checking their Teams messages.

In terms of student absence, as of Wednesday, we had 145 students with confirmed cases which is more than 1 in 25 students. Obviously, the isolation and further disruption to learning is far from ideal and teachers will work directly with students to ensure content is covered and learning continues. Actual student absence was around 20% on Wednesday, much of it unreported, so please ensure you communicate all absences with us to ensure they are authorised - either via email [studentabsence@bhasvic.ac.uk](mailto:studentabsence@bhasvic.ac.uk) or [StudyBugs](#).

In terms of coming out of isolation a student may come out of isolation on the morning of Day 7 so long as they test negative on a lateral flow device and so long as it is 24 hours after their Day 6 test. I have included some of the [FAQ](#) responses from our website at the end of this letter, with further details of processes and systems around Covid for ease of reference.

## **Guidance for Parents**

We have been asked to share guidance for parents and carers on online sexual harassment and keeping children safe online.

The Children's Commissioner has launched [a guide for parents and carers on online sexual harassment and how they can support children to stay safe online](#). "The things I wish my parents had known" draws together advice from 16 to 21 year olds on how parents should manage tricky conversations around sexual harassment and access to inappropriate content, including pornography. I hope you may find this useful and it will complement the work we do in our tutorial programme directly with students.

## **Wellbeing Webinars- January/February 2022**

As part of the continued wellbeing support for students/parents and carers at BHASVIC our wellbeing partner Andrew Wright ([ActionYourPotential](#)) is delighted to announce the Spring term webinar programme. The aim of Action Your Potential's work is to inspire, engage and inform students and parents about the human brain and how, through changes to our daily behaviours, we can improve and develop ourselves.

The Webinars take place on Zoom, please see the full schedule below. There is [one link to sign up](#). All webinars are recorded and on the hub within 3 days of being broadcast.

### **From Study Zero to Study Hero**

Tue 25 January 8:00 – 8:30pm

Wed 26 January 8:00 – 8:30pm

Thu 27 January 8:00 – 8:30pm

### **Wellbeing Course For Parents And Carers**

Tue 1 February 8:00 – 8:30pm

Wed 2 February 8:00 – 8:30pm

Thu 3 February 8:00 – 8:30pm

Please also visit our [Wellbeing \(bhasvic.ac.uk\)](http://bhasvic.ac.uk) page where full details of the webinars will be posted as well as our wider wellbeing support.

### **A1 Parents' Evenings**

Please note that our **A1 (first year) Parents' Evenings** will take place on the following dates:

- Thursday 13 January 17:00-19:00
- Wednesday 19 January 18:00-20:00

Full instructions have been emailed from our Events team; please email [events@bhasvic.ac.uk](mailto:events@bhasvic.ac.uk) if you have further questions.

With thanks for your support and best wishes for 2022,



William Baldwin

Principal

## Covid FAQs

**Do I have to wear a face mask onsite?** For Staff, Students and Visitors, we request that you wear a face covering when you are onsite - this includes all activity and in lessons, communal areas, when socialising in groups outdoors, in corridors and when moving around the college. You can remove your face covering when eating or drinking.

**How will I continue to learn if I've got Covid/ I'm self-isolating?** Contact your teachers and Personal Tutor via Teams and let them know - make it clear whether you are currently too poorly to study or are able to work from home. Your subject teachers will establish the best methods for you to continue with your studies. Your Personal Tutor will make the weekly tutorial information available to you via Teams.

**How long do I need to isolate for if I have tested positive?** The 10-day isolation period has been shortened to 7 days, so long as a negative test result is achieved on day 6 and day 7. The tests must be 24 hours apart. After the result of the test on day 7 the isolation period can end.

**If coming out of self-isolation early (due to a negative LFD on days 6 and 7) would a student re-join college on day 7 or day 8?** It all depends on when they take their 2 consecutive (but 24 hours apart) LFDs on day 6 and 7. Anyone who tests negative on their day 7 LFD can leave their home and go back to college, but the day 7 test must be 24 hours after the day 6 test so it will depend on what time of day they took the test initially.

**What if my teacher/tutor is absent due to Covid?** Your teacher (or another teacher in the department) will communicate directly with you via Teams. Please make sure that you check Teams each morning, especially before travelling to college (so as to avoid any unnecessary journeys). Normally, your teacher will set the class work during their temporary isolation but if you have not been told in advance via Teams that work is being set, please assume that the lesson is being covered and attend as normal. In most cases we provide are able to provide cover for absent tutors so that tutorials can go ahead at the usual time. However, when this is not possible, you will be contacted in advance via Teams, either by your Tutor (who might be working from home) or by another member of staff.

**Do I need to wear a face covering in my BTEC Exam?** Face coverings help protect the wearer and others against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of COVID-19.

The DfE state that masks must be worn to and from the exam but in the exam itself, masks are optional. We strongly recommend that face coverings be worn by our students during their exam, unless exempt. This will mitigate against the spread of the virus and will help avoid students missing lessons and needing to isolate.

**What about Face Coverings for Mock Exams in February?** Although a review of face coverings is due by 26 January, if things haven't changed then our position on this won't either, so we advise to be prepared for face coverings in the mock exams being strongly recommended by us. We'll update with a precise position nearer the time.