



25 February 2021

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

There's lots in this update as we need to get a fair amount of information across. I appreciate a return to site is making some anxious; I know others can't wait to return. I hope that wherever you are on that spectrum we can make it a smooth transition. I wanted to share with you our planning to date to ensure you are in the loop – this communication does not include every last detail as it is aimed at providing the key headlines.

Summary:

Monday 8 th March	Tuesday 9 th March	Wednesday 10 th March
Timetable suspended	Timetable suspended	Face to face teaching resumes (2/3rds) model
Onsite Covid testing of students - Last names A-K	Onsite Covid testing of students - Last names L-Z	Students Self-book 2 nd and 3 rd onsite Covid test (until Thurs 18 th March).

Return to face to face teaching on site:

We will not be able to commence face-to-face teaching for all students from Monday 8th March due to the requirement for students (who consent) to have had a negative Covid test result before returning to the classroom. Therefore, all teaching (including remote teaching) will be collapsed on Monday 8th March and Tuesday 9th March in order for us to test our students before returning to face-to-face teaching via our 2/3rds XYZ model (as per the Autumn Term) on Wednesday 10th March.

Mass Onsite Covid Testing of Students – Test 1

We will be testing students using lateral flow tests. More information on these, and other aspects of testing, is available from our FAQs page [here](#). This page is regularly updated, so please continue to check next week for further information. On Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th March we will be testing up to 1,500 students per day using 25 test bays across three different venues on site. Students will be invited to attend a pre-allocated 5-minute slot.

By attending, students will be giving their consent to be tested. We will presume that those who do not attend do not consent to being tested. Please read the full consent statement [here](#). Students will also be provided with this information when they receive the invitation to attend a test. Upon arrival for the test, students will confirm they have read, understood and agree with the statement.

We want to encourage all our students to take up this opportunity in order to provide confidence to all for a safer return to site. However, those students who do not consent to be tested will return to site for lessons from Wednesday 10th March. We will of course keep the names of students who are not tested confidential, but we will report a % uptake figure to our wider community.

There is no requirement to take a test, but students who are experiencing high anxiety can request to take their test in a quieter venue at the end of each day. Places will be limited so please speak to your tutor or Additional Learning Support team by Monday 1 March if you would like to be considered for one of these. We will also be running virtual workshops and relaxation sessions for any student who is experiencing anxiety about testing and/or the return to college. Please e-mail wellbeing@bhasvic.ac.uk to request further information. You can get more information on managing your wellbeing [here](#).

Detailed instructions will be provided with the invitation to attend – we estimate we will get these out around the middle of next week.

We are aware that for these two testing days, we are asking students to travel in for the sole purpose of being tested. However, we ask this to enable as swift a return to onsite lessons as possible. We advise travelling privately if you can; for those using public transport, please be aware that schedules are likely to be reduced at this time.

Mass Onsite Covid Testing of Students – Tests 2 and 3

Additionally, we are required to test students for a second and third time onsite, 3-5 days apart, before a transition to home testing. This will be done in the Sports Hall from Thursday 11th March to Thursday 18th March. Students will book themselves in via our VLE, fitting it around their lessons. We will have a capacity of 1,000 test slots a day. Students will be asked to plan ahead and be prepared to travel in earlier or leave later in order to take their 2nd and 3rd tests.

Students who do not consent, or are exempt from, the initial testing will be able to subsequently join in with testing at any stage in the future.

Home Testing

We will be moving to home testing after students have completed 3 tests onsite. Students will collect home testing kits after their third test onsite. They will then be available to collect on a rota basis (details to follow) from the Theatre from Monday 22nd March.

Return to teaching

Teaching will resume under the 2/3rds model from Wednesday 10th March. Students will follow their XYZ timetables. The mitigating factors and protocols that were in place during the Autumn term will remain (reduced lesson capacity, staggered timetable, one-way systems, face-coverings on site, room entry protocols, enhanced cleaning, social distancing etc.).

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Students

Clinically extremely vulnerable students are required to shield until the end of March (effectively the start of the Easter holidays). We are speaking to students individually where this is the case and will support remote learning for them. Students who are not clinically extremely vulnerable but have high anxiety or are living with members of the family with high vulnerabilities are expected to return but should contact their tutor if this needs discussing.

Staffing Covid Testing

We are confident we can staff the testing for Monday 8th and 9th but once the college is open we will need 50 additional staff to facilitate the on-going testing of students from Wednesday 10th March to Thursday 18th March from 8:30-3:30. This will be paid work (although volunteers welcome!). If you are interested please email your details and availability to recruitment@bhasvic.ac.uk with the email title 'Covid Testing Work'.

FAQs

We will be extending the [FAQ section](#) of the website early next week. The Covid Testing in College section will be the first concertina on this page. We will go into more details than we have been able to cover in this letter. Please use this as your first port of call for questions.

Finally...

I know the majority of this letter covers testing and not educating our students – we are well into planning a smooth transition back into the classroom and have a staff planning day on March 3rd to help facilitate this. This day will also allow us to train staff to perform duties associated with testing.

I also know that Ofqual's decisions on the grade awarding process are being announced today and this will undoubtedly raise many questions. We have been making plans for the different scenarios and policy decisions from Ofqual and will be finalising all arrangements for our students swiftly. We seek to ensure the very best and fair outcomes for our students, supporting their continued wellbeing, learning and development through the remainder of their courses. We anticipate publishing our initial plans and arrangements later next month.

Thanks for your support and patience.

Best wishes,



William Baldwin
Principal