



26 March 2021

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

It's over a year on from the first lockdown and the closure of schools and colleges.

Continuing with our two-thirds model

We've thought long and hard about the timing and implications of moving away from this model and decided to stick with the 2/3rds model after the Easter holidays. A number of colleges are moving away from their 50-50 model (one-week on site, one-week remote learning) after Easter. I feel our 2/3rds model is very different and provides a weekly momentum to attending that the week on/week off rotas have not.

A week is a long time in a pandemic and to try and guess where we might be in three weeks' time just doesn't feel right. It would have been really positive to give our A2 students a full timetable for their final two weeks of formal lessons at the college. However, continuing with the 2/3rds model after Easter is sensible given that:

- There is the potential for increasing virus rates due to schools re-opening and lockdown easing over Easter
- It will provide certainty for both students and staff
- Continuing with 2/3rds model for at least two weeks after Easter mitigates the chances of having to quarantine more A2 students during the fortnight of their End Point Assessments, which would be immensely disruptive for them
- At the Student Forum held on Wednesday, there was a unanimous student wish to take things cautiously and safely, so that A2 students wouldn't be at a greater risk of quarantining during their End Point Assessments – students felt the risk of quarantine wasn't worth the extra few lessons they'd get at 100% capacity

In terms of the national roadmap out of lockdown, our proposal is to move away from the 2/3rds model and back to full capacity from May 10th which coincides with current plans to allow households to meet indoors and to re-open indoor venues like pubs, restaurants, cinemas, and theatres. The vaccine programme will also have reached more of our staff and parents/carers by this point in time. A full table of dates can be seen on the [FAQs](#) section of the website. I hope this provides clarity for now – but please remember that things may change. That's one thing we've learnt this year!

A1 Summer Exams

We want to give our A1 students the **learning opportunity** of experiencing a low-stakes summer exam for each of their exam-based courses, to enable them to practice an exam assessment, normalise a large-venue exam experience as much as possible, recap learning, get important feedback and enable some 'closure' of the A1 syllabus taught to date as they move towards the A2 year. These students didn't sit GCSE exams and didn't revise for them either, in large part. We do not want to leave our students until well into their second year of A levels before they get familiarity of and practice in exam technique on their exam-based Level 3 courses – that just wouldn't be fair.

These exams will be **low-stakes** – progression into the A2 year of the course will not depend on passing the exam (but all the other [criteria for passing into the A2 year](#) will). The papers will be shorter than usual and will take less time to revise for students. Feedback will not be a significant, high-stakes experience, but will look and feel like feedback in-class feedback from their teacher for other on-course assessments.

Strategic Plan

At our Governor Corporation meeting on Monday evening we signed off a new Strategic Plan. I'm really excited about the direction this sets for BHASVIC for the next few years – and it has been refreshing to look at long-term strategy instead of operational disaster recovery responses! If you'd like to take a look here is the [link](#). (It's only 3 pages long).

Annual Report

We've also published our (slightly delayed) [Annual Report](#) for the 2019-20 Academic Year. Despite being curtailed by a pandemic, there is much to celebrate. Do take a look.

Testing

Students should have enough stock of self-tests to continue testing every 3-5 days over the Easter holidays. Please ensure results are recorded online at [Report a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test result - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Additional kits can be picked up from the Sports Café (upstairs in the Sports Centre).

Finally...

The anniversary of the start of lockdown this week made me look back on my correspondence from this time last year. I wrote this to students, parents and carers on 20th March 2020:

Today marks the end of the most difficult week we've ever encountered in education. We've been so busy dealing with the operational implications of moving to remote learning, preparing for closure, implementing new systems and ensuring everyone is updated with momentous decisions like the cancellation of exams, that I haven't really had time to think of the enormity and emotion of it all until now.

Who knew since then that we'd be dealing with the cancellation of exams for the second year in a row and that we would only have 13 weeks of face to face learning (the Autumn term) in one calendar year. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for your help and support in navigating this past year both individually and collectively.

I wonder what we will be looking back on in a year from now and remain optimistic that we will be back into familiar territory with the rhythm of a normal academic year.

Best wishes,



William Baldwin
Principal