



29 January 2021

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

Re-opening: This week the Prime Minister outlined current thinking around the tentative re-opening of schools and colleges and said any return would be from March 8th at the earliest. This seems ambitious on current data, but confirms that a return straight after half-term will not happen.

It's difficult to predict what will happen – something we have become familiar with over the course of the pandemic. We will find out in late February and we know from previous experience that a phased return is the preferred model – who knows whether this will be based on age (Primary first?) or stage (to prioritise 'exam' years?). We may well see a preference for rotas across more phases – something that colleges pioneered during the Autumn term.

With our two-thirds model we have the foundations and controls in place which we can review and refine as and when we know what the parameters of re-opening are.

Ofqual's consultation on replacing summer exams ends today. We've made a submission flagging our concerns directly, but more importantly we have made representations to the Association of Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges Association to try and address the many aspects of the proposal that we think are unworkable.

In the meantime, we continue to assess students as part of the learning process but understandably this is generating anxiety for some. As you have been previously informed, the planned mock week is cancelled and we will not know if/how to replace it until after the consultation outcome is published. For now, we want students and teachers to proceed as closely to 'normal' as allows. I'll be recording a video message for students to try and ease their anxieties which will be available early next week.

Lesson Delivery: Our aim is for staff to carry out as much live engagement as possible in lesson delivery, with acknowledgement that this will vary according to individual teacher's (and student's) home circumstances; as well as the demands of the course and the particular content or assessments that they are working on.

In some courses, students are currently being set independent work for one lesson a week, or are set independent tasks during a live lesson. We wanted to reassure you that this method of delivery is selected carefully by our teachers as a sustainable and optimal experience for students. BHASVIC staff use their expertise and experience to formulate the best model for delivery. Where students are working on tasks independently, the teacher communicates their availability for support, advice or Q&A access, either during the timetabled lesson time or at another point in the week.

We are aware that there is debate, and in some cases disagreement, at a national leadership level about the best form of delivering education in these circumstances. We feel it would not be appropriate to enforce a one-size-fits-all approach to our diverse curriculum offer and is supported by this government guidance [What's working well in remote education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

Careers Week: Over the next few weeks, our first year students will start thinking about next steps and career options in tutorial. We will encourage students to take part in the research activities coming up and explore different progression pathways. This is obviously also relevant for second year students who still aren't clear on their next steps. There are a wide selection of resources available on our website for parents, carers and students, which are updated on a regular basis. Please see page links to: [Careers & Employability](#); [Higher Education](#); and [Parents and Carers Dashboard](#)

We will be focusing on National Apprenticeship Week - (8 -12 February 2021) and would like to draw your attention to National Apprenticeship Show, Wednesday 10 February. To register please use this link <https://nas.vfairs.com/> This will provide students and parents with more information about the apprenticeship pathway. Further information about Higher Education and other study routes will be forthcoming over the next few weeks.

Student Wellbeing: We appreciate how difficult it can sometimes be to keep motivated at the moment, but want to congratulate all students on how well they have managed to keep going throughout January: Spring is on the way! However, if students are finding it hard to keep positive, then don't forget there is a range of support available. Check out our [wellbeing webpage](#) for full details, or e-mail wellbeing@bhasvic.ac.uk. Students can also speak to their tutors about Lockdown Learning workshops, which are designed to help organise time and independent study. We are also working with **Action Your Potential** to provide webinars to help students get more out of their study and also to deal with anxiety and procrastination. More details [here](#).

There is lots of wellbeing information for parents and carers too, on the [Parent/Carer Noticeboard](#) and an [A-Z of Young People's Support](#) with useful links to external support agencies.

I hope you and your family remain well.

Best wishes,



William Baldwin
Principal