

A Brief Guide for Parents/Carers

We're delighted that your young person has decided to study at BHASVIC. Making the transition from school to college can sometimes feel as daunting for parents and carers, as it does for students, so we have designed this short guide to support you in this journey. We hope it will help you in knowing what to expect and how to access advice and support whilst your young person is at BHASVIC.

What's Different About College?	✓	A1 & A2 - Year groups are referred to as A1 (first years) and A2 (second years).
	✓	Independent study and 'free' periods - In general students have 13.5 hours of timetabled lessons a week. They are expected to match this time with independent study, a <u>minimum</u> of 4.5 hours per subject, or 9 hours per double. There are gaps in students' timetables to enable them to work in college or at home, and they need to learn to manage their time carefully. Students are expected to take responsibility for meeting key deadlines – particularly important on BTEC courses.
	✓	Additional hours - Throughout the year students have a variety of additional compulsory sessions which they are expected to attend as part of their commitment to studying at BHASVIC. This includes Personal Development dropdown days, progression workshops and various subject and careers enrichment activities. Skills Week is in the final half term of Year 1 and consists of work experience and other employability-related activities. Details of these sessions are provided in advance to ensure students can plan to get the most from them. Students also have one hour per week on their timetable for tutorials, which are compulsory.
	✓	Part-time work: Getting a part-time job can be an important step towards financial independence but this should not get in the way of independent study and lesson time, including tutorial. Our Student Contract advises no more than 10 hours paid work per week, in term time.
	✓	Students will be normally committed to three subjects (or equivalent) over two years. We work hard to ensure students are on the right courses but it is not unusual for students to have one subject that they 'click' with less than their other subjects. This is reflective of University study or employment and may well help to build resilience as they continue with it.
	✓	We are a large college of almost 3500 students but it will 'shrink' as students become more comfortable and get to know their classes, teachers and Personal Tutor. We aim to be the 'stepping stone' between smaller, local school environments and larger, diverse universities and work places.

How to Help?	✓	The biggest source of support comes from home. Let us know if your young person has any support needs. The Personal Tutor is usually the first point of contact if you do want to inform us of anything.
	✓	We try to include the student in all discussions so please regularly ask your young person questions about how college is going and if there is anything they are struggling with.
	✓	Encourage take-up of extracurricular opportunities to help your young person build a positive social experience at college.
	✓	Help your young person to manage their time, stay on top of homework, and to ask for help from their teachers or Personal Tutor if they need it. Remember students join us as GCSE students and need to quickly develop the skills to be independent A level or BTEC students.
	✓	Please help your young person organise their notes. On two year linear courses they will revisit information many times throughout the two years. Good organisation will really help.
	✓	Regularly check Parent Portal once college begins. You will also be automatically emailed if your young person receives a Support Plan. These are designed to help students get back on track with their studies so please discuss it with them.
	✓	Attendance: Students are expected to maintain excellent attendance to get the most out of their studies (college averages are above 94%). You will be contacted by text if a student has missed a lesson and asked to authorise the absence. Please do not book holidays in term time.

What Support is there for Students?



Personal Tutor and Tutorial programme: Students have one timetabled group tutorial session a week supporting with key college processes and broader pastoral discussions. The tutorial programme covers themes and topics such as My Future Plans, Looking After Myself, Life Skills, Independent Living & The Wider World.



Tutors also meet each student for a 1:1 every half term and oversee your young person's overall progress whilst at college.



Student Services: All tutorial sessions are deliberately situated in the Student Services building where there is a range of other specialist [support](#) and resources including, Careers Advice & Work Experience, Counselling & Welfare Services, [Financial Support](#), Bursaries, Travel Information, and Student Union.

What Support is there for Parents and Carers?

At BHASVIC we aim to encourage increased student independence, suitable for post-16 study, whilst keeping parents and carers involved and in the loop: it's not always an easy balance to strike, but we have had lots of positive feedback, so we think we're on the right track. Here are some of ways in which we keep you informed:



Regular Parent/Carer communication with termly college updates and a dedicated [Parents' & Carers' page](#).



Your own Parent Portal online account which enables you to view 'live' data (attendance, progress reviews, support plans etc.) and track general student progress.



Invitations to a Meet the Tutor evening in the first part of the Autumn Term, followed by a subject-based Parents' Evening in either December or January (depending on year group).



Access to additional information evenings and specialist workshops at key points through the year (HE Applications, Specialist A2 Pathways, Wellbeing During Exams etc.)



Texts and e-mails which alert you to any particular concerns we have regarding attendance or progress.

