New Parents & Carers Information Evening - Transcript

Slide 1 – 00:00-00:35

Will Baldwin – Thanks for looking at the presentation for new parents and carers of students starting at BHASVIC in 2023. I'm William Baldwin, I'm the Principal, and you will hear from me in this presentation, alongside Nigel Fisher, Head of Student Experience, who will outline the tutorial programme at BHASVIC. Vicky Johnson, who is Head of Guidance, who will talk to you about support available and what happens when things may go wrong, and Linda Lab, who is the Head of Additional Learning Support.

Slide 2 – 00:35-01:42

Will Baldwin – So Year 11 students will have come to their Moving On Day at BHASVIC. We hope it was a positive experience. How much they will have shared that with you will depend on how communicative they are. Students right now will be enjoying their long summer holidays between GCSEs finishing and A Levels starting. No doubt they will be starting to wonder about BHASVIC; new travel journeys, new teachers, new friends, new subjects and their new timetable.

They face two big hurdles; a social one and an academic one. In our experience, students worry most about social, but actually need most help with academic. They tend to self-manage the social and fit in find their people. We recognise though that it does tend to take time to settle in, and bridge the gap between GCSEs and A Levels. We provide lots of support, both inside and outside the classroom. I hope you are reassured about this during this presentation.

Slide 2 - 01:42-02:55

Will Baldwin – Your young person will not be with us for long. This is the shortest stage in their education career. It's a period of transition that really does represent their formative years. They will leave BHASVIC as adults. All of them will celebrate an 18th birthday while here, which means legally they'll be able to start a business, take out loans, vote, marry without your consent. They'll even be able to watch 18 certificate films. Many of them might take what they consider is the most important test of their lives. That's their driving test and

that represents the freedoms that are on the horizon for this age group. Ultimately, leaving BHASVIC in two years' time may mean leaving home. For some of you that might take a bit of getting used to, others of you maybe you can't wait for that, but don't worry. Given the state of the economy, student fees, rental market and house prices, they'll be back. So it's our job at BHASVIC to get students settled pretty quickly, but also thinking about next steps soon after they've settled in.

Slide 3 - 02:55-06:50

Will Baldwin - How to flourish at this level is a test of two things. It's a test of maturity and it's a test of the ability to manipulate knowledge. I'll start with maturity. 16-18 year-olds are busy people. They have busy lives managing full-time college, learning with part-time jobs, clubs, societies, sports teams, and dare I say, a social life thrown into the mix. And that requires discipline. It requires prioritization, and it requires balancing a number of spinning plates. It's important that we help students to learn how to manage that and prioritize their work, but also to know when not to panic or to be perpetually anxious about their outcomes here.

Another key difference between GCSE and working at a college level is the need to be able to manipulate knowledge. Students need to know content inside out. They need to be able to deconstruct it, reconstruct it, argue for and against, marshal a line of argument with discipline. To do that successfully, they need to know content and not have just skim read it the night before an exam. It has to be learned over a period of time inside out.

At college, we are bridging the gap between school and adulthood. At school, about 80% of work is undertaken in lessons here. We expect students to do around 50% of their work in the classroom, 50% of their work outside of the classroom working independently. Now that work will be structured by a set assignments and work from teachers, but they do need to spend time learning outside of the classroom as they progress on in their educational career. If they go to university, for example, around 30% of their learning will be done in lectures and seminars and around 70% will be done independently. And we know at work around 95% of our time is self-directed. So what we're doing is helping prepare students for life.

After BHASVIC however, you are one of our first line of defences. So if you don't think your

young person is keeping on top of things or putting the time in outside of lessons, then please do flag that to us. Vicky will tell you more later on in this presentation about how we help students manage this.

I want to say a little bit too about our teaching methods here at BHASVIC. A number of departments use what might be called flipped learning. 21st century teaching and learning is very much about optimising the expertise of the teacher in the classroom. A number of departments require students to do preparatory work before a lesson. That work is accessible. It's usually going over content that requires descriptive elements and learning to it, not the manipulative elements I was talking about just now, so that then they can go into a lesson and the teacher can build on that using application context and manipulation that really takes students forward.

So it's about getting the easier stuff done in a student's own time and maximising the expertise of a teacher in the classroom.

If you ever hear that flipped learning is that you have to teach yourself at home, that is simply just not the case. It's a highly effective tool and responsible in part for the great outcomes we get here at BHASVIC.

Slide 4 – 06:51-08:05

Will Baldwin - One of the key messages about what makes a BHASVIC student is that it's not just about the qualifications, although clearly outcomes are essential. We place as much emphasis on personal and social development, understanding their rights and responsibilities, leadership, community action, and social justice. There is a learning culture here, which is about lifelong learning. And our student contract, which students receive in their Welcome Day session, emphasises the values which underpin our philosophy about what makes a BHASVIC student. And that is we want them to Be-BHASVIC. And by that we mean we want them to Be Happy, Active, Successful, Valued, Independent members of our college Community.

One thing I'd ask from you as parents and carers is to encourage your young person to participate with everything on offer at college, in order to ensure their time is not solely about just learning curriculum and qualifications, but about making the most of a rich community here.

Slide 5 - 08:06-09:44

Will Baldwin - Here's a slide of our Parent and Carer Dashboard. This is where you access the key communications we have between college and you as parents and carers.

There's a plethora of information available via this dashboard and we keep you informed in a number of ways. You'll be able to meet your young person's tutor early on in the Autumn term via an online consultation to be able to put a name to a face and to see how they are settling in. In January, we have curriculum Parents' Evenings where you are able to meet their academic teachers in subject-based areas. Again, that's an online consultation.

We have a weekly email that goes out, usually on a Friday, digesting things that have happened and things to look ahead for. And you'll be able to access from this page, the Parent Portal, which keeps you updated with the data and attainment data in terms of how students progress and any course concerns that may have been raised and support plans that are in place.

You'll get emails highlighting if a student has been absent unexpectedly and if a support plan has been raised, and Vicky will say a bit more about that.

Now I'm going to hand over to Nigel Fisher, who is Head of Student Experience.

Slide 6 – 09:45-11:35

Nigel Fisher - Hello, my name is Nigel Fisher. I'm pleased to be the Head of Student Experience at BHASVIC. I'm part of the Student Services team and my responsibilities include tutorials, careers, college events and enrichment, and also the Student Union. And here you've got a picture of our Student Union Executive from a couple of years ago.

Just to say, I'll be talking about what we think of as the student journey from before, into, through and out of BHASVIC and how tutorial and events and enrichment fit into that.

As Will's already suggested, sixth form is a short step between those two important phases of secondary school and adult life. We see it as our job to help students to navigate that, those transitions. So even before they arrive, but definitely as soon as they start with us, we start to prepare our students for their next steps and careers. Advice and support through

tutorial are critical to this, and there are lots of options available to students. They have choices to navigate and we hope to provide all the information that they'll need to make the right decision for themselves.

We're also interested in helping students to build their CV and their portfolio and to help them understand that college life isn't just about doing the subjects that they've chosen.

Students are expected to participate in tutorials and lots of other activities, all of which count towards their program of study. And in general, the students who do more of the enrichment type activities are the ones that get the most out of their time at the college. That's an idea that we want to our students to pick up on and we hope as parents and carers that you'll help them to understand.

Slide 7 - 11:36-16:15

Nigel Fisher - This series of slides shows what we think of as the student journey into, through and out of BHASVIC.

The green boxes represent things that we do with our students before they come to college, so that's possibly a Taster Day. They might have had a schools talk from a BHASVIC member of staff, come to our Opening Evening. They've all had an interview, and recently as highlighted there in yellow, we've had our Moving On Day and the next thing to come will be GCSE results and enrolment at the end of August, beginning of September.

The blue boxes represent things that we do in the first year. So initially, we're helping our students to settle in and we'll have our Welcome Day and then induction period for first year students. Then quite quickly we move on to thinking about progression within the first year, so we have Progress Reviews. This is where students sit down with their teachers online and have a conversation about how their subjects are going.

We're encouraging our students to get involved in enrichment, which for first years is mostly the idea of joining a BHASVIC club or society run by students for students of which there are many. But for some students they maybe getting involved in a college team like the football team or the netball team, or participating in enrichment such as playing in a band or one of the college groups or a performance of some sort. All of those things we count of as enrichment.

We also start thinking about future planning. So after Christmas, we'll be talking about My Future Plans and starting to think about longer term career ideas.

About halfway through the first year, we start talking about transferring to the second year, such as what are the requirements that we're making it through into the second year, and also starting to think about the summer exams at the end of the first year.

This year as highlighted there in yellow for the first time, we've had Skills Week at the end, near the end of the first year, which is a a week of work-related work experience type activity, which all students expected to participate in. For most students that's self-sourced work experience, and for other students, a variety of online or bespoke work experience opportunities. That's something we've introduced this year for the first time. It's gone down very well and it's been very successful and we're expecting to run that exactly the same this coming year, 2023-24.

Then students progress into the second year and again, there's an A2 induction period. Then for most students in the Autumn term of the second year, the priorities are thinking about applications for whatever it is that they wish to do after BHASVIC. Most students in their second year pick up what we call a Portfolio Course, which is a short course, normally an hour and a half a week or sometimes a little more, from a range of options of which there were this year about 90 different choices. It's a course which broadens their curriculum and provides a little bit more of a diverse offer than just their three main courses.

Then we'll start thinking about what to do after BHASVIC, firming up on things like university offers, other applications to art foundation courses or apprenticeships for example, and then seriously thinking about revision and completing coursework. Then before we know it, we've got to our Leavers Event.

That's not quite the end of the process though. In the summer holiday after the second year, we have our results day and we provide support and guidance for students around their A Level and BTEC results. We've also encouraged all of our students to join the BHASVIC alumni scheme, so they can stay in touch with the college as represented by this blue arrow. We hope at least some of our former students, our alumni, will come back to the college and share their wisdom with the next generation of students.

Nigel Fisher - BHASVIC students are aspirational. They do want to challenge themselves, but it's worth making some important points at this stage. If your young person is not very sure about what they want to do next or is a bit concerned, just say 'don't worry, this is normal'. It's okay to come to college not having a clear idea of what you're aiming at in the long term. Part of our job is to help them work that out while they're here. We want our students to be successful and we want them to succeed when they leave the college. We know that it's important that they make informed choices about what they do in the longer term, and we've got a range of highly specialised staff who are well placed to teach and support them. In the Student Services Centre, for example is where they'll find most of the key support staff who aren't teachers, but who are here to provide the wider support services that they might need, including our careers advisors, our counselling service where they can find out information about bursaries and widening participation.

All of our students have a personal tutor who will run their tutorial sessions in the Student Services Centre once a week. I'll say more about that in a moment. All tutors report to a guidance manager, who has a team of tutors and helps to support those tutors to help support students and make a sense of all of this and putting it all together. Definitely we think of tutorial as the glue that pulls everything together, which is what I'll talk about on the next slide.

Slide 8 - 18:08-21:14

Nigel Fisher - This slide shows some screenshots from our virtual learning environment, where we have resources for A1 tutorials. The reason I'm showing you this is because you can get an idea of what the main theme is for each of the six half terms of the first year.

We start with Induction and Identity. We move on to Wellbeing and looking then at The Wider World, so that's where we introduce careers advice and thinking about longer term planning. The fourth half term is largely focused on the process of A1-A2 transfer courses in the second year and tutorial pathways, which I'll explain in a moment, and also future planning, which will be starting to think about or return to the theme of careers and how to get to where you want to go. The final half term we largely focus on summer exams and progression.

Now just to say that all A1 tutorials are mixed, all students are in a group of 22 from across the first-year cohort, so they could be timetable with anybody from any subject across the college. Tutorial is an important part of life at BHASVIC. They're not an optional extra, they're on the timetable They occur once a week in the Student Services Centre for 45 minutes as a whole group activity, with the tutor having an additional 15 minutes for one-to-one time during the week. They will make appointments with students to see them on rotation usually. A student will have a one-to-one conversation with their tutor on regular intervals, but if there's anything that crops up in the meantime, they can get in touch with their tutor or their tutor can get in touch with them. We have a tutorial program of content which everyone gets, and then the one-to-one support.

Our resources are especially tailored for the 16 to 19 age group and beyond the tutorial, we extend our content through what we call dropdown days or Personal Development Days, where we can get into more detail in some of some of the topics that we need to cover around wellbeing and relationships. That's related activity which takes place outside of the tutorial, but on a weekly basis. Tutorials are the mainstay and the tutor is the person in college. You should really know what's going on with your young person, and as it shows on the slide, it's this important role of having, as well as the tutorial content itself, the time to fit in some one-to-one conversations with your young person.

Slide 8 - 21:15-23:38

Nigel Fisher - In year two tutorials are a bit different in that students can choose which pathway they follow based largely on what they think their most likely destination will be when they leave college.

For example, most of our students choose to go to university. About 70% go to university either straight away or within two years of leaving college. Most of our students choose to go into what we call the UCAS Pathway, UCAS being the system by which students apply to university. Now, the size of the boxes on this image give you a rough indication of the relative sizes of the different cohorts. Most students choose UCAS, so that's why it's the biggest box.

A large cohort though choose instead what we call our Employability and Enterprise

Pathway. These are students who are particularly interested in doing an apprenticeship or

looking for work or going into training when they leave college. So they choose the Employability and Enterprise pathway.

We have a large cohort of students interested in applying to Oxford and Cambridge, so we have an Oxbridge Pathway.

We also have students who want to make an early application for a degree in medicine, dentistry or veterinary science and those students form what we call our Medical Pathway. Finally, we have a similarly sized cohort of students interested in doing an art foundation or a visual arts related degree course when they leave college and they choose the Visual Arts Pathway.

Now, just because a student chooses a particular pathway, it doesn't mean it's a barrier to changing their mind or to making a different application. For example, a student in a Visual Arts group can still make a UCAS application if they want to and they'll be supported with that. Likewise, a student in a UCAS group could choose to apply for an apprenticeship if they want to. We expect all of our students to have an understanding of all the different routes open to them. In year two, they can choose to focus their attention on what they think is most likely, but certainly there's no barrier to them pursuing other opportunities and avenues as well.

Slide 9 - 23:39-26:31

Nigel Fisher - I'd just like to say a little bit more about enrichment at the college. We're very proud of the enrichment that we offer to our students, so those are things which are beyond just their main courses.

Enrichment occurs in a variety of different ways. For example, curriculum teams, so teaching teams, they organise lots of additional activity which students can opt into. This includes local and international trips and field visits, music and drama performances, societies, such as there's a MedSoc Society with lots of biology science students who choose to join, and we have competitive sports organised by the sports department. So, these are things organised by teaching teams.

We also have a wide range of student led activities, including the BHASVIC Student Union, I'll say a little bit more about that in a moment, student clubs and societies of which there are more than 25, which lead into things such as talks, debates and fundraising activities.

We have Student Ambassadors who put themselves forward to help the college with events and activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

We also offer a wide range of options as far as careers and employability goes. I've mentioned Skills Week before and that is a massive opportunity for students to do work experience or a work placement. Some teaching departments also organise employer visits. We have employers and training providers come into the Student Services Centre as part of our tutorial program. We have a very large careers and progression fair in January, which is called BHASVIC Futures Fair, which is probably the biggest careers event of its kind in the local area. So, we're trying to give students an understanding of the world of work.

We also offer wellbeing enrichment activities such as mindfulness and yoga, which students can opt into. We run wellbeing webinars throughout the year for first years and second years and parents can access some of that information too.

As mentioned before in year two, we have a wide range of portfolio courses that students can choose from, which goes on their timetable in addition to their other subjects. Examples being from the list; a short course in astronomy, British Sign Language and graphics.

Students get to choose one of these courses from the list to just add a bit of enrichment activity in the second year.

Slide 10 - 26:32-28:26

Nigel Fisher - The final slide from me relates to BHASVIC's Student Union Executive. This slide has been put together by this year's newly elected Executive to introduce themselves to the students. Each year there's an election for the Student Union Executive. All first-year students are able to stand for election, with the elections taking place after Christmas in the first year.

At the top right corner, you can see the names of different members of the Executive and what their particular priority area is. As it says on the slide, they're here to represent the student voice and they are taken very seriously. Our Student Union Executive are represented on the college's governing body. They have meetings with senior managers and senior leaders. They organise the Student Union Forum, which is where students from across the college can come together to raise questions and any concerns, and then the Student Union Executive take those ideas forward for discussions with management across

the college. The Student Union is also active locally in campaigning around issues of concern to young people and they've been working closely with Citizens UK for example, to campaign around the cost of travel in the city and beyond. That's a relatively new development, but one that's been highly effective, and the Student Union are a crucial part of the college's approach to hearing the learner voice, so enabling students to have their voice heard.

I am going to hand over now to Vicky who will talk to you more about guidance and student support at the college. Thank you very much.

Slide 11 - 28:27-29:43

Vicky Johnson - My name is Vicky and I'm the Head of Guidance. I just wanted to take a few moments to talk to you about guidance, student support and some of the things we think is important for you to know about your young person's journey at college.

I'm a Guidance Manager and Guidance Managers are central throughout the learner journey. From interviewing students on application through to supporting with progression plans and organising alternative courses if things don't quite work out.

The team and I come from a range of backgrounds, from careers guidance and teaching and are experts in ensuring and supporting your young person to achieve the best of their abilities. At sixth-form, all Guidance Managers manage a team of pastoral tutors, as well as coordinating various elements of cross college responsibility. We put together Making The Transition PDF to give you the top tips and information we think is useful for parents and carers and students to know ahead of study in college. We'll share this with you after the event today, but I'll be running through some of the key key information with you now.

Slide 12 – 29:43-32:23

Vicky Johnson - A1 and A2 are our year groups. A1 is our first years and A2 is our second years. Independent study and free periods are quite a big part of college life. Students have around 13 and a half hours of timed lessons a week. They're expected to match this time with independent study at a minimum of four hours per subject or eight per double. There are gaps in student timetables to enable them to work in college and 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.

Throughout the year, students have a variety of additional sessions that they're expected to attend as part of their commitment to studying at BHASVIC. This includes Personal Development Days, dropdown days, progression workshops, and various subject and career enrichment activities. Details of these sessions are provided directly to the student in tutorials and they know in advance what they are in order to make the most of them.

Some students will be looking at getting part-time jobs and this can be an important step towards financial independence, but it should not get in the way of independent study, lesson time or even tutorial. Our student contract advises no more than 10 hours paid work per week per term.

Students will normally be committed to three subjects over those two years. Here at BHASVIC we work hard to ensure students are on the right course path, but it's not unusual for a student to have one subject that may not click as well as the other subjects. This is relative to university study or employment and may help to build resilience as they continue with it.

We are a large college of almost 3,500 students, but it will shrink as students become more comfortable and get to know their classes, teachers and personal tutors. We aim to be the steppingstone between smaller local school environments and larger diverse universities and workplaces.

Slide 13 - 32:24-33:58

Vicky Johnson - There is lots of support here at BHASVIC for students. Tutors are probably the first line of pastoral support. Students have one group tutorial a week supporting with key college processes and broader pastoral discussions.

The tutorial program covers things and topics such as My Future Plans, looking after myself, life skills, independent living, and The Wider World. Tutors also have one-to-ones with students throughout the year.

We recognise that sometimes things go wrong, and students need a little bit of extra support or intervention, primarily in subject areas. We have a support planning system

when a student is falling behind or perhaps not reaching their potential. This is a supportive measure to help students get back on track, and you as parents and carers can support and help keep track when they're falling behind and know where to access academic support. Students are expected to be proactive and engaging with this process, working with teachers and guidance to meet targets.

Students also support each other, through things such as Student Union, wellbeing, peer mentoring, clubs and societies.

Slide 13 - 33:59-34:15

Vicky Johnson – The Student Services team play a key role in supporting our students. We have an excellent team based in Student Services, that is there to support, guide and signpost to internal and external services.

Slide 14 – 34:16-35:07

Vicky Johnson – Internal services that are available; careers advice, work experience, counselling and welfare services, as well as financial support, bursaries, travel information and Student Union.

All of our tutorial sessions take place in the Student Services Centre, which helps students to know where to access these areas of support. Information about our services is shared with students as part of the induction and can be accessed via their personal tutor, guidance manager and the Student Services Reception.

Slide 15 - 35:08-36:23

Vicky Johnson – For those who engage with the college and learning. At this point I want to mention attendance. A Level work is fast paced and content heavy, so missing lessons and having time off can feel overwhelming to catch up. The feeling of being behind or not up to date can be the biggest source of anxiety for many of our students. This is clearly exacerbating which students miss lessons to. As parents, if you could encourage and support us to endeavour to get your students into lessons, then this I guarantee is their best chance of achieving their potential. Please do check the Parent Portal and check on your young person's attendance. We are aware that this is the period of time on the brink of adulthood and can be challenging for students to navigate.

Each year we ask our student what helps them to feel positive and what benefits the emotional health and wellbeing. We wanted to share this with you, so you can think about how to support your young person in promoting self care.

Slide 16 – 36:24-36:56

Vicky Johnson – Enabling our students to develop independent skills while maintaining positive wellbeing and good mental health. As well as supporting their learning, we offer additional support and sessions around these ideas in our tutorial program and Personal Development Days.

Slide 16 – 36:57-37:39

Vicky Johnson – To promote independence, we ask students to bring their own devices. Much of our learning is supported digitally and coursework is set online and submitted online. They are the digital generation, and this also prepares them for life after college.

If there's any concern over your young person having access to equipment, we have laptops available to bursary students, but please do contact us as we would not want any student to be disadvantaged in having access to a computer.

Slide 17 - 37:40-39:34

Linda Lab - My name's Linda Lab and I'm the Head of Additional Support at BHASVIC. We're very lucky here at BHASVIC to have a very well supported ALS department, which means we can work with students across college to support them during their time here.

Lots of your young people we will already be aware of because they'll have disclosed at application, and we will have met them at interview and we'll meet them again at enrolment and take down what their support needs are and offer them weekly study support, which is our standard offer here (an hour and a half with an ALS student every week).

We also work with students who are referred to us throughout the year. Any students who may be struggling academically are referred and we are able to work with those students too.

Alongside the hour and a half weekly study support that we offer, we do have a team of LSAs (Learning Support Assistants). Sometimes they work one-to-one with students for interventions, to help them access their studies. We also do in-class support, but we try to keep this to a minimum because the aim of support here is to try and make our students independent and to find strategies to the work and access their learning independently.

We also help with transition.

We have key workers who work with our students who have diagnosed ADHD or are autistic students, and with our students who have EHCPs, Educational Healthcare Plans, we have an allocated name lead who works alongside those students and collaborates with parents to make sure that the outcomes of the EHCP are met and that we can coordinate that support more effectively.

Slide 18 - 39:40-40:48

Linda Lab - Exam access arrangements are also available to students who meet these specific criteria. These might include extra time for assessments, having an electronic reader, word processor or scribe, rest breaks, a smaller room (but please note that a smaller room at BHASVIC may not be as small as a room that a young person might have had at school), or in some cases prompts.

Students who are assessed at school, who come with exam arrangements, are all reassessed on entry at BHASVIC. We never get that any arrangement continues, however it's very rare, but we do have to stress that, and students again are referred to us throughout the year, so we do assess students who are referred and then if they meet the criteria, are awarded extra time during their time at BHASVIC.

If a student has exam access arrangements for a medical condition, then we do ask that that medical evidence is sent to us as soon as possible. If it complies with regulations issued by the Joint Council for Qualifications, then we will be able to put in place appropriate exam access arrangements for them.

Slide 19 – 40:49

Will Baldwin - Okay, so we are coming to the end of the presentation. Thanks for your patience and sticking with us. Here are some key dates that you need to be aware of. Obviously, Results Day will be flagged in your diary.

We will send out enrolment appointments imminently, where a student will be invited to a particular time on one of those days: Wednesday or Thursday 30th or 31st of August.

They will have a one-to-one appointment with an enrolment advisor confirming their subject choices and looking at their results and their progression options and making sure that all still fits as planned.

We then need a bit of time to construct our timetable so we never quite know who we're going to get or what they want to do. Therefore, Welcome Day is not until Monday 11th September, a week after schools will have gone back. However, students will be set work at enrolment that they will need to complete over the following 10 days that will be available online and they'll get information about that at their enrolment session. It should only take six hours per subject for them to complete that work. Hopefully it'll blow some of the cobwebs away from their long summer holiday.

Welcome Day is a half a day session, which they'll be invited either to a morning or an afternoon session where they will be able to come in and get their feet under the desk here at BHASVIC, and the normal timetable will kick in on Tuesday 12th September.

Okay, I hope we have provided you with some useful information tonight around how we support students with us and their journey with us. We're really excited about them joining college and look forward to meeting them in September. Thank you.