



23 September 2021

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

We are sorry to be writing to you with the news that, after much consideration, the Brighton and Hove Accord of colleges – BHASVIC and Varndean College – will not be running a Taster Day this Autumn Term for Year 11 students. It was postponed in the summer term, in response to a Local Authority request to suspend onsite, face-to-face transition events.

BHASVIC and Varndean College had hoped to be able to work together in consultation with our feeder schools, to coordinate a day for students (who had applied to the Taster Days last July) to attend college for the day and come to lessons they were interested in. However, it has not been possible to determine a date for this which doesn't disrupt the Year 11's in a number of schools and the impact this may also have on current first and second year sixth form delivery.

The need for all institutions to provide exam experiences and assessments over this term has unfortunately had to take priority over the Taster Day experience. A Taster Day would involve suspending learning for three year groups for the day and would disrupt other key aspects of the various institutions' core functions. Given the recent announcement that GCSE examinations will go ahead in Summer 2022, we are aware that schools are focusing on ensuring Year 11 students have as much learning time as possible before they undertake their examinations. Therefore, we do not feel it is appropriate to lose valuable teaching time.

We recognise the incredible value the Taster Day experience of college life and college approaches to learning has for students, both as a motivator for GCSE study and the final exams, as well as giving an important source of information and guidance to inform decisions about next steps after school. As we move into the formal admissions processes for our Year 11 students, we want to highlight the offers and opportunities that will take place over the coming weeks and months to support all students considering BHASVIC and/or Varndean College as a future place of study:

- **September:** School talks, during the day, in assemblies, careers lessons, bespoke talks and during student/parent information evenings.
- **October and November:** college open days/evening events, onsite and in person, with teachers, current students, leaders and wider student services all available for advice, to answer questions and to help with decisions. These will include online recordings of past, virtual events, so that detailed advice and guidance about the college and courses can also be reviewed any time online and at home.
- **November and December:** Application process and advice available from the colleges' admissions teams.
- **December through to Easter:** College interviews, providing one-to-one advice and guidance on college and course choices.
- **Summer Term:** onsite and face-to-face day at college, after GCSE exams, attending chosen lessons, orientation and induction, setting of summer work and advice and support services. Bespoke transition support for students with particular needs.
- **August:** Results Day (and afterwards) advisory service.
- **Late August/Early September:** enrolment, with a full range of advice and guidance services available.

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Once again, we are sorry that we are not able to provide the Taster Day experience this term, following the postponement of these events last summer. However, we want to reassure you that we will be working exceptionally hard and with confidence and experience to support all students to make informed decisions about their next steps beyond secondary school.

With kind regards from BHASVIC and Varndean College Senior Leadership teams