

HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

3rd January 2022

Dear parent/carer,

firstly, I hope that all of our students and families had a relaxing Christmas, festive period and a Happy New Year. I am sure we are all hoping that 2022 will be the year where we say some form of goodbye to the constant need to focus on covid. Secondly, I am sorry to interrupt your Bank Holiday Monday. I have been holding off writing an update on the planned return to the Academy this week in case of any late change announcements from the Government (of which there have been some) and am hoping that this letter today gives us the most current picture.

Return to Academy for Lessons – Originally our intention was to have all students back in on Wednesday following tomorrow's INSET and LFD Testing Day. We have however had to make the difficult decision to push the return of students back to Thursday. **Our intention is that all students will return to site at 8:30am on Thursday 6th January 2022.** I am very sorry for the late notice and appreciate it will impact on some families with regards childcare arrangements. The government have advised taking time following the bank holiday weekend to assess impact on staffing from confirmed cases and ensuring we have time to plan for absences, securing potential cover teachers and giving staff time to upload online resources for any students having to self-isolate. We also need to ensure we are able to safely and sensibly open to all year groups. We are already aware of a number of confirmed staff cases in recent days and need this time to contingency plan for how we open and run a provision for our students. Once again I apologise for the late notice but appreciate the understanding from the community. Our priority is having our Academy open to all students and taking the day Wednesday to contingency plan will give our students the best longer term experience. We are happy to provide a packed lunch for any free schools meals students who may wish one which can be collected between 11:30am and 12:30pm on Wednesday from Main Reception. If any families wish to take up this offer please email info@bristolmet.net by 9am on Wednesday morning giving the name of the student(s), year group and any dietary requirements.

Lateral Flow Testing Tuesday (tomorrow) - The Government have requested that every student who is able, takes **one** lateral flow test **on site** before the return to the academy. *This includes any student who has previously tested positive for Covid (unless they are still currently self-isolating following a very recent PCR test). This is different to published guidance so please do take note and still come for an LFT.* Please look for the slot for your child(ren) based on the year group **they are in.**

Tuesday 4 th January 2022				
Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
8.45am – 9.45am	10.00am -11.00am	11.00am - 12.00pm	12.30pm – 1.30pm	1.30pm-2.30pm

Students will enter and exit for testing through the fire exits of the Main Hall (by the bike sheds in the main car park) and will likely only be on site for a maximum of 15 minutes. The system will be exactly like it was in September though only a single test is being requested this time. As has always been the case, consenting and participating in testing is optional though of course the greater the testing uptake the statistically lower chance of ongoing Covid infections within the Academy reducing the chances of continued disruption to education provision. This is particularly pertinent given the apparent increased transmissibility of the now prevalent omicron variant. Whilst I appreciate that the early data suggests this variant may be more transmissible but (potentially) less dangerous the current self-isolation rules mean the biggest threat to our ability to provide ongoing face to face education is case numbers within our staff. Anything we can do to therefore keep case numbers lower will protect our ability to stay open to students. I therefore do thank you in advance for any support you provide.

For all year groups if you consented previously on the return in September and still wish to consent you need to take no further action (except come to site to take your test) as we can carry your consent forward. If you didn't consent previously



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and now wish to (or vice versa) please complete a new consent form. The link to the online consent form is Lateral Flow Testing - [Please click here](#)

If you really cannot make the assigned time then please do still come to site for a test (up until 2:30pm) but coming at the wrong time slot will slow down the testing due to the administration so we really do appreciate the effort to attend during the allotted year group slot.

Face Coverings – I know many families will have seen the announcement yesterday that the Government have requested that face coverings make a return to classrooms as well as communal areas for the first 3 weeks of term. I also appreciate that for many of our young people this will not be desirable and I fully understand that thinking particularly as we enter the 3rd year of the pandemic. However, as outlined earlier, the biggest threat to schools now remaining open for face to face education is absence of workforce due to self-isolation. I therefore do appeal to our families to assist in any way they can to protect our ability to stay open which is a key priority for us. I know that for the staff at Bristol Met and, I would imagine, the majority of students, we will do everything we can to not return to another school closure period. We will therefore be asking students to wear face coverings on arrival, as they move around the Academy and in classrooms. They will not have to wear them when sat eating at social times or when outside. As has always been the case, if a student feels they are unable or unwilling (or of course medically exempt) then we will support that right to choose but we really are appreciative of the support from as many of our community as we can working together to keep the Academy open to all students.

Once again, thank you to all of the community for the continued support and willingness to adapt and change as the situation continues to evolve. We do not underestimate the toll that the last 22 months have had on our community and remain highly appreciative of the 'Team Met' approach. We look forward to seeing **students back at 8:30am on Thursday** (and tomorrow, Tuesday, for their LFT at the allotted time in the day).

Best wishes,

Mr C Shaw
Principal