

**HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS**

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Apologies for a second letter in as many days from me but as we approach the full return of students there are a few questions that have been asked which I thought many families may appreciate a response to. Before covering those points I just wanted to say thank you for the continued support over the last two days around the request for students to attend site for an LFD test prior to returning to school. Uptake has been strong. We know many students have been testing at home so attending site to do the same has seemed unnecessary. We know some families feel unable or unwilling to test and we respect that decision but also appreciate the understanding shown when it comes to us making the request in line with current Government guidance.

**Clarification of return time for Year 8 & Year 10 Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September**

In the video I shared the other day (<https://youtu.be/YqollvzpN-o>) I inadvertently had that Year 8 and Year 10 return at 9:30am on Tuesday rather than 8:30am as per the table shared in the letter. The correct time is **8:30am for Year 7, Year 8 and Year 10 on Tuesday**. The 9:30am on Monday for Year 9 and Year 11 is to enable us to welcome Year 7 and properly direct their first day before the other two year groups arrive. We don't need that extra time on Tuesday and we know all year groups will appreciate as much time together as they can!

*There is audio on each slide but there is also a bit of silence at the start of each slide before the audio kicks in. I apologise for my poor video production skills and thank you for your patience! Use the silence to pre-read the slide.*

	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> September	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> September	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September
Year 7	From 8:30am to 3pm	From 8:30am to 3pm	From 8:30am to 3pm as all students return full time from this day onwards
Year 8	NOT ON SITE	8:30am to 3pm	
Year 9	9:30am to 3pm	NOT ON SITE	
Year 10	NOT ON SITE	8:30am to 3pm	
Year 11	9:30am to 3pm	NOT ON SITE	

**Uniform**

We know that some students will still be waiting on uniform ordered from Monkhouse. We know there have been some public national concerns about Monkhouse and a wider supply chain problem. Please be assured that any student who does not have full uniform on their return will be treated sensitively. Monkhouse are providing us with a list of outstanding orders so we will be aware of what is still outstanding. We have some stock of items so if we are able to lend then we will and where we don't have anything in stock we will provide a note for the student until we can get them fully kitted. No student will be turned away or sanctioned for not having full uniform where the issue is caused in the supply chain. Of course we share some concerns about the wider issue but we will focus on getting students back in and fully running and then look to future plans around supply and uniform.

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### **Covid Protection Measures**

A few families have contacted us to ask what measures we are keeping in order to continue to protect the most vulnerable in our community. We really do appreciate that for many families the pandemic (which we recognise has not gone away) continues to cause heightened anxiety particularly for those with underlying health problems. At the same time we recognise that many families have long felt that restrictions on young people in particular are disproportionate to the risk they are statistically at and with the protection seemingly offered by the vaccine programme ongoing restrictions are not welcome. There are, of course, many families with views all between. I hope that the community recognise that in schools we really are trying to balance an array of differing views and, as we have done throughout, try to keep that balance, in line with current guidance provided or directed at schools but it will always be impossible to satisfy all requests. In line with the current guidance many of the restrictions we had in place during the 2020-21 year have been scaled back or removed. Face covers are no longer required anywhere in the Academy but any student who feels more comfortable wearing one is welcome to continue to do so. Bubbling of year groups is also removed. Isolation of close contacts, as identified by the Academy, following any positive case is not required (and in fact our understanding would be that we could not anymore legally request that close contacts remain away *unless* they are identified and notified by NHS Test and Trace who still hold that legal power to direct isolation albeit the Government have said that anyone Under 18 will not be classed as a close contact for isolation purposes).

However, we have maintained areas of our preventative control measures which are either still recommended or we feel able to sensibly maintain. We will maintain our enhanced hygiene practices. These include having hand gel (in addition to sinks with soap and water of course) freely available and encouraged where willing. We are retaining an additional member of daily housekeeping to ensure high contact points (toilets, handrails, door handles etc) are cleaned frequently. Teachers will continue to request that students clean down work areas frequently. Ventilation in Bristol Met is good already given it is a modern building with both openable windows in most rooms but also an active mechanical ventilation system in every room that turns over fresh air in excess of building regulations and we continue to liaise with the building management company to ensure ventilation systems are routinely maintained and in good working order. We will continue to ensure, where it is possible, that classrooms are arranged so students are facing forwards rather than face to face. At social times we are asking students to sit and socialise when inside as much as they can and also, weather dependent, to go outside at social times as much as possible to ensure good access to fresh air (and pandemic aside this is a good approach for all of us anyway).

We are also maintaining the one way and keep left systems we introduced (some were introduced pre-pandemic anyway) as we believe they not only contributed positively to our covid protection response but that they also created better flow of students and contributed to a calm and orderly movement within a busy building.

### **Vaccination of young people**

Some families have contacted us concerned with recent and ongoing media coverage and/or speculation around potential vaccination of young people. Currently Bristol Met students would only be eligible for vaccination on the grounds of particular vulnerability as the vaccine is only routinely available to those aged 16 or over. There is much speculation about an imminent decision to offer vaccination to those aged 12 and over coupled with speculation that children will be able to self consent to receive the vaccine (ie, will not need parental permission). There are also several media reports that schools have been



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contacted and been asked to draw up plans for mass vaccination using schools with a deadline of today and an implementation of next week.

Just to be clear...we have had **zero** contact from Government, NHS or the Department for Education asking us to prepare and submit a vaccination plan for young people. First and foremost we are a school. Administration of vaccines (of any type) is a medical procedure and schools do not administer medical procedures. It is true that schools are routinely (and have been for decades) used as vaccination centres for routine vaccines offered to young people but these have always been organised and managed by healthcare professionals with the school being used as nothing more than a conduit to send consent letters to parents/carers (you will recognise that the consent forms you receive are healthcare branded and not Bristol Met branded). The decision on whether the Covid vaccine will or will not be offered to secondary aged children has had no input from schools (and I don't imagine we will be asked for input). If the decision is made to offer vaccines to children (and to my knowledge that decision has not been made/announced) then the further decision on whether children can self-consent will have no input from school staff. At all times the decision on whether to proceed with a medical procedure rests with a registered medical professional and not a member of Academy staff. What I can guarantee to our community is that school staff will not try to persuade young people one way or another and that, if the time comes where a vaccine is offered to young people using Bristol Met as a centre, any decision made by any individual will be respected 100%.

Again I hope that the community understands that at all times we try to operate in the best interests of all of our young people and would never attempt to undermine personal or family wishes but that we have a duty to disseminate advice and guidance received through formal channels (Government, Ofsted, DfE, Public Health etc) given that we are a publicly funded body.

I hope that all of our community have a restful weekend. We have enjoyed seeing many faces over the last two days and really look forward to seeing all students back in the building across Monday and Tuesday.

Yours sincerely

Cameron Shaw  
Principal