

## HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

On the last day of a strange term I wanted to write and thank you for your patience, understanding and continued support as we navigate the “roadmap” ahead. I know I have referenced “strange times” quite a lot in the last year, but I think it is fair to say none of us anticipated quite how lengthy and involved the pandemic would be when we first communicated about it back in March 2020. However, current conditions still remain positive. Cases remain relatively low and stable. The vaccine programme is looking positive. Everything is pointing in the right direction so thank you for supporting us and our young people in what will hopefully be the tail end of this time.

Just before we officially break for the next two weeks I wanted to update on a number of areas:

**Red Nose Day** - £300 donated even though we didn't have a non-uniform day. We ordinarily have a non-uniform day, and I know some students were disappointed that we didn't, but we decided we needed to prioritise settling back into a full routine before doing something different again. We have received a donation from a commercial company which means we will be donating the amount we normally raise from the non-uniform day to Comic Relief to ensure they can still do the great work supporting children both in the UK and abroad. We are then looking at a non-uniform day later in the Academic year and any funds raised will be split between some charities nominated by the student body.

**Everyone's Connected** – We know many of our families will have seen the recent media discussions around this website and the very important area that it brings to the spotlight. I just wanted to assure all of our families that we already have very robust procedures in place for dealing with any concerns reported to the safeguarding team along with robust processes for dealing with any historic concerns that may arise. The other side to this highly relevant discussion area is the education and prevention work. Understandably, whilst no doubt very overdue in society, this body of work takes much more time to develop and implement and is much wider than any one establishment. I want to take this opportunity to assure families that it is an area already under development at Bristol Met but one which we seek to accelerate as well. I aim to bring you further updates over the coming months.

**Bristol Protests** – I am sure all of our families are acutely aware of the recent protests in Bristol centre and the national coverage they have received. We have deliberately not focused much on this in the Academy over the last 10 days; partly due to the ongoing pressures of balancing the return to wider opening with the rapidly approaching end of term and partly because, unlike many other recent movements such as environmental or black lives matter, they seem to have featured less in daily discussion from the student body. Obviously the matter of these protests is a fairly complicated area (revolving around how laws are formed and implemented). I just wanted to highlight it to assure families that we monitor all local (as well as national and international) events closely and try to respond where we think it is relevant and appropriate whilst trying to ensure that, as is legally required of educationalists, we don't impart personal political views on our students.

**Letter from Gavin Williamson** – The Secretary of State for Education, the Right Honorable Gavin Williamson MP, has written a letter to young people which can be [read here](#). It recognises, as we do and I am sure families do, the tremendous efforts that our young people have made in navigating this period of time in their lives. It has been hard enough as adults to navigate and we are immensely proud of our young people for their mature approach.

**Covid Home Tests** – the next batch were available and given out this week which will cover the 2 weeks of Easter Break along with the first week back. The Government request is that students continue to test twice a week during the break and in advance of returning from the Easter break. Staff are also continuing to test twice weekly to try and keep transmission chains low and allow successful completion of the roadmap out of the pandemic. The Government have also

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asked that schools record student test outcomes in addition to it also being reported to the NHS direct (we have had to continue doing this for staff over the last month) so to try and simplify the process we have developed an online Form which should allow submission of the twice weekly test result with minimal effort. It is [available here](#) and we would be grateful if you could complete it each time any student takes a test at home. Thank you for continuing to support this process as we know it is a large ask in terms of time and commitment from our young people and families. It continues to be under constant review (as does face coverings) and we are hopeful that as soon as the science supports these measures will be removed by the Government.

**Test & Trace Payments** – Although we really hope to see few, if any, cases in the coming term at Bristol Met it still remains the potential. The Government have introduced a £500 payment for those who have to take time off work due to children self-isolating following test and trace contact or being told to do so by their school. There are conditions and criteria attached so for full information please [visit this link here](#)

**Uniform Reminder & Uniform Exchange** - As always, we really value the support in upholding the high standards of uniform that we see in our community. We know it has been a particularly challenging time with obtaining uniform during lockdown and with the recent acquisition of 'Initially Yours' by Monkhouse and their closure of the Staple Hill branch. We really do appreciate the efforts families have made in ensuring our standards remain high. We have worked on updating our [Uniform Booklet](#) which is on our website. In particular can we respectfully ask families and students to remind themselves of the expectations on PE kit given students are currently wearing the kit for the full day on days they have PE. We have not made any changes to Uniform but have tried to simplify the booklet. We moved to a non-gender specific policy several years ago so any of the uniform items listed are acceptable for any students. We are continuing to work on our uniform policy and are currently working on adopting the Halo Code and ensuring that our uniform is non-discriminatory to any student and that our uniform approach pays due regard to all of the cultures and religions we see in our incredible community. We also remain committed to making uniform as financially accessible as possible and are continuing to explore avenues to widen this further.

We are looking at setting up a buy back system for good quality but unused uniform and looking at how we can then make that available to purchase by families to further keep the cost of uniform lower and to keep the ability to purchase local now that Initially Yours have been taken over and the Soundwell branch closed. Additionally, we are working with Monkhouse to enable the Academy to become a local pickup point for uniform orders. We will keep you posted as this progresses.

Finally, on uniform, a group of invested parents have set up a Facebook group to buy/sell/swap uniform locally. Although this is not anything to do with the Academy it is a really nice idea and many families may find it useful so if you would like to either be able to sell/pass on second hand uniform for other families or source additional uniform items no longer needed by others then do consider [joining this group](#).

### ***This final section is for families of Year 11 students:***

**Year 11 updates** – since the announcement in January of the cancellation, for the second Summer, of the formal end of Year 11 exams we entered a fast moving and evolving environment. Please be assured we continue to monitor and react on an almost daily basis to the landscape. We will ensure that all students get the best possible chance for demonstrating their understanding before the final submission window. There is a specific Y11 letter from [Miss Barnes here](#).

In addition, there is an update from Mrs Cooper, Principal of [CLF Post 16 here](#), with some exciting news about a new build for the P16 centre allowing it to operate largely from one site from September. If you have already applied for CLF P16 check out her letter and update. If you haven't yet applied and are interested then have a look for contact details in the letter.

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To all of our families, I hope everyone has a really good two weeks (despite the weather forecast next week). Please take plenty of time to relax and enjoy the fresh air. Please do continue to support and respect the restrictions (and simultaneously enjoying the slight freedoms in the new period of the roadmap we are in) in the hope that in doing so it continues to be the beginning of the end.

Best wishes and, as always, look after yourselves and each other and stay safe



Mr C Shaw  
Principal