

HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

18th August 2021

Dear Parent/Carers

I hope all of the Bristol Met community are managing to enjoy the summer break despite the absence (it feels) of much sunshine. Fingers crossed for the next few weeks!

I know we are still a few weeks away from return for students but also know the time will fly by. Seeing a number of our incoming Year 7 students in the building this week for Summer School it felt like a good time to write with a few updates.

Summer 2021 Exams

I shall start with recognising our outgoing Year 11 cohort. Last year I wrote after results to congratulate the cohort for being the first cohort since World War 2 to have had the amount of disruption and uncertainty that they experienced. I really did not expect to be repeating those words a year later! It was with great privilege that we saw almost every single outgoing Year 11 student come and collect their results envelopes, in person, on Thursday last week, and saw them open their envelopes, generally with excitement and relief, to see that their years of hard work and commitment had been recognised in the way that was fairest in the circumstances.

The system in place following the cancellation of formal exams was never going to be perfect (and most of us would agree that the exam system is far from perfect either) but the process this year allowed us to consider a much wider range of evidence when awarding students final grades. Despite any speculation and debate in the media our Year 11 students should be proud of their achievements and we as a community are incredibly proud and applaud them for the way they have navigated this landscape. Well done Class of 2021, thoroughly deserved and good luck with the next steps of your educational journey.

Returning in September 2021

I know students and families have been waiting patiently for specific information about their return date and I thank you for your patience. We have been waiting for further updates around the Government's intentions, particularly around on site testing prior to return in September and any further updates about vaccinations etc. I can now confirm that the Government have asked that schools carry out on site testing (lateral flow testing) of **all** students (who are willing and able to consent) twice as part of their return to school in September. This will be similar to the process in March when we fully re-opened (appreciate our incoming Year 7 will not have experienced that). This places a huge logistical and administrative demand on the Academy so we really thank you in advance for your continued patience whilst we arrange the testing. Our aim is to have every student back in and running on a normal routine as quickly as possible.

In order to speed up the return to a normal routine we are likely to invite students to attend site on either Thursday 2nd or Friday 3rd September simply to take a test and return home. We aim to send around the details of this early next week. This would then enable us to carry out the second test during their scheduled Induction Day(s) as outlined below enabling a full return to normal timetable for all students from Wednesday 8th September. If your child will not be available on the 2nd or 3rd (due to holiday for example) then please do not worry as we will have a plan in place for testing on the Monday and Tuesday as well. However, the more we can test on the Thursday and Friday the easier it will be for staff to manage the induction days so we appreciate in advance any co-operation possible.

Below is the current plan of how we propose to schedule the Induction Day(s) for different year groups. This is necessary to enable the additional testing being requested by the Government. Please ensure you know which day (it is both days for Year 7) and time your child needs to be on site, particularly if you have different children in different years:

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	Monday 6 th September	Tuesday 7 th September	Wednesday 8 th 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	

We are still sorting out finer detail but we know people need to arrange childcare and work so will try not to deviate much from the above. We will firm up full details and communicate at the latest after the bank holiday weekend.

Contact Tracing / Isolation – following the most recent changes to legislation you may have seen that schools are no longer asked to carry out contact tracing when notified of a positive case in the student (or staff) body. Any contact tracing will be carried out by NHS Test and Trace. Likewise, it is now no longer a requirement for anyone who has had both vaccinations, or any person under 18, to isolate when identified as a close contact. Therefore we should see far fewer isolations and disruptions to education and family life. We therefore will not be routinely notifying parents/carers of any positive cases in the school or identifying close contacts. We will of course assist NHS Test and Trace when requested and the current guidance is that if anyone under 18 is notified by Test and Trace of being a positive contact they should consider booking a PCR test as part of working together to reduce further spread. We appreciate that ever evolving and changing guidance can be confusing so if you are ever in any doubt as to whether your child should or shouldn't attend site please do contact us for advice.

(Lateral Flow) Testing – as detailed above, the Government are asking for secondary schools to administer two on site tests for all students, who are willing and able, prior to their return. The positive news is that there is a new lateral flow test which requires nasal swab only rather than also needing the throat swab. For **all incoming Year 7** students we will need to capture a parent/carer consent (or rejection of consent if you do not wish your child to be tested). For all other year groups if you consented previously on the return in March and still wish to consent you need to take no further action as we can carry your consent forward. If you didn't consent previously and now wish to (or vice versa) please complete a new consent form. The link to the online consent form is [Lateral Flow Testing](#)

PE Changing Rooms –from September the changing rooms will be back in use and we will return to students arriving daily in their full uniform. This has been acceptable in the Government guidance since the full opening back in March but we held off implementing to allow us more time to monitor and react to case rates. We understand that some students would prefer to be allowed to wear PE kit to school on days they have PE but, particularly in wetter and colder weather, not changing significantly limits the range of activities on offer.

Break & Lunch – we will be returning to a single break and lunch in September due to the requirement for bubbles no longer existing. We will be opening a 4th servery and using some of the learning from this year to enable distributed catering across the site which has improved service speed this year. Although having all students on one sitting does place more pressure on site space it has many added benefits for students in terms of social interactions and access to facilities and clubs. We will of course keep it under review and make amendments and improvements where we can.

Halo Code – after several months of development with staff and student input this has now been adopted in the Academy. We now allow do-rags and bonnets as well as previously allowed religious head coverings. As per uniform policy all coverings need to be navy or black with no logos or additional signs. We continue to ask that any hair colouring is natural in tone.



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Some other messages

Road Safety – we have received some reports from local residents concerned about young people being exposed to harm through risk taking behaviours. These include playing chicken in the road, riding on wrong side of road on bikes into incoming traffic and the riding of E-Scooters. For young people it will seem like they are merely out enjoying themselves (given the amount of restriction they have faced over the last 18 months this is completely understandable) but of course none of us want any of our children or students to be injured. Please therefore take a moment to do a reminder around road safety with your children.

Once again, thank you for your continued patience as we ready ourselves for September. Best wishes for the remaining few weeks of the break.

Yours sincerely

Cameron Shaw
Principal