



## Department for International Trade

Graham Stuart MP

Department for International Trade  
King Charles Street  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AH

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000  
E [stuart.correspondence@trade.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.correspondence@trade.gov.uk)  
W [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

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Dear International School Students and Parents,

I am pleased to write to you about the reopening of UK independent schools this Autumn term and assure you of the measures that have been put in place to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all students.

For the education sector the COVID-19 outbreak has been as challenging as it has been unprecedented. In the UK, independent schools took decisive steps as the situation unfolded, supported students both in the UK and internationally, provided the latest information and ensured that every student was safe and looked after.

With restrictions now easing across the UK, our schools have been preparing for students' return: focussing on their safety, following the latest government advice, and so ensuring that they can return to the UK with confidence.

We would like to reassure you that all governments across the UK are adhering closely to the most up-to-date scientific advice and guidance, which is available publicly online. Our responses are calibrated to the level of threat posed by the virus and entirely informed by the data and the advice we receive.

NHS services are available to both domestic and international students. International students will always be able to access treatment that clinicians consider is immediately necessary or urgent at no upfront cost. No charges apply to testing for coronavirus, and international students in the UK will also be able to access specific COVID-19 advice through a new COVID-19 online service [www.111.nhs.uk/covid-19](http://www.111.nhs.uk/covid-19).

UK schools always put student care and well-being at the front of everything they do, and independent schools and the support bodies that represent the sector have produced detailed plans to ensure the protection of students at all times, whether in the classroom, whilst undertaking activities, playing sports or on excursions. These plans and risk assessments will keep students safe while making sure that their experience in the UK will be as enjoyable as ever.

A voluntary charter for independent schools, setting out best practice on the support and safety of students, has been produced. All member schools which have adopted the Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) **Covid-Safe Charter** confirm that they will comply with all government rules and guidance and will meet the requirements when boarding schools reopen. I believe the UK already has the highest standards of regulation for

boarders in the world and this Charter is an additional layer of protection and reassurance. A link to the Charter can be found here:

[www.boarding.org.uk/userfiles/bsa/pdf/Advice%20and%20Guidance/82902%20BSA%20COVID%20V2.pdf](http://www.boarding.org.uk/userfiles/bsa/pdf/Advice%20and%20Guidance/82902%20BSA%20COVID%20V2.pdf)

International students bring huge benefits to the UK, socially, culturally and economically and, as a government, we are proud that so many parents trust UK schools to give their children the best possible education. International students make our world class schools even better. They enrich the experience of all students, bring greater diversity to our school campuses and stimulate fresh ideas and new perspectives. This cultural exchange helps build life-long friendships, as well as laying the foundations for future networks, and important business, political and diplomatic bridges.

The UK Government is determined to support the sector recover from COVID-19, deliver the high quality teaching for which it is famous and ensure the safety of every student.

We very much look forward to welcoming you to the UK.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Graham Stuart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**GRAHAM STUART MP**

Minister for Exports

Department for International Trade