

5 May 2020

Dear Student

## RE: Year 12 UCAS

I hope that you and your family continuing to keep well during this difficult time. We are looking forward to a point in the future when we will be able to return to a more normal situation and see you all back in school.

I hope by now you have been able to have a conversation with your tutor, just to touch base and see how things are. If you do feel that at any point you need anything, or would benefit from talking something through, please just email me, Miss Bateman, or your tutor and we can call to have a chat.

I am receiving a lot of great feedback from staff about how well Year 12 are getting on during this strange period of time. It may seem hard, but you are developing the kind of resilience and independent learning skills that will aid you greatly when you start studies at University, or when you begin an apprenticeship. The comments I am hearing from staff make me very proud of all you are doing. Keep it up and make sure you stay on top of things so that when we do return you are not at a disadvantaged compared to your peers.

Usually at this point of the year we would be nearing completion of Year 1 content with a view to preparing for mock examinations at the end of the year. We would also be launching our "Next Steps" programme through tutor groups in order to start the research and application progress for university and apprenticeship applications. Whilst it may feel very early to be starting to consider your future beyond the Sixth Form, from 5 May the UCAS search tool for your cohort goes live and from 19 May you can begin an application. Usually the majority of your research takes place in the summer term, with the universities offering open days so you can investigate further and you normally also complete the initial sections of an application, such as personal details. In addition your tutor would normally start drafting your personal statement with you. This is a 4000 character piece of writing where you explain what course you hope to pursue, why you want to do this course and why you would be a suitable candidate. Many students find this the most challenging part of the application, but with our support we can ensure you produce something of the highest quality. Many of the universities are now running virtual open days which I would highly recommend you have a look at to help investigate potential destinations.

In September students begin to finalise their applications, including their choice of course and the 4/5 locations that they are considering applying to. From 8 September you can send your application and this window for submission remains open until 15 January.

For students considering an application to an apprenticeship there is a different process. There is no collective date when applications have to be completed and submitted by and you apply for the apprenticeship places as and when employees advertise them. If you are considering a higher level apprenticeship with a firm such as Nestle, or Rolls Royce, where some of our previous students have gone on to, this process may begin in September 2020, as there are usually a few rounds of the process to go through. However, local employers seeking apprentices will probably not advertise until around Easter 2021. Consequently you may need to be patient and avoid becoming frustrated by others around you seeming to be getting on with things. It is just that they are working to different deadlines. In order to be ready for apprenticeship applications it is important that you have an up to date CV and covering letter prepared.

It is frustrating that we cannot support you in person with the early part of the research and application process but our aim is to do all we can remotely. Included with this letter is a "Next Steps" booklet that we have put together to cover the kind of activities that we do in tutor sessions over this period of time. If you work through it I hope it will help you to get started, until we return to Sixth Form and can help you in person. Also included is a research grid that I think is useful to complete when carrying out your investigation of potential courses and locations if you are considering University. We usually encourage students to consider both the apprenticeship and the University route, rather than deciding on one firmly at this point. There is so much choice and so many opportunities out there that we don't want you to rule anything out just yet.

I also will send out shortly a guide to completing the actual UCAS application later, once "Apply 2021" is open.

I have also sent a letter to your parents regarding the "Next Steps" programme to provide some guidance as it also may be the first time that they have been through this process.

Continue to stay safe. I look forward to being able to see you in person soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Andrews', written in a cursive style.

Mr D Andrews  
Head of Sixth Form