

20th April 2020

Good morning to all Year 12 and Year 13 students

I hope that you are all well and have got back into the rhythm of studying again. From this week I will be sending out this email every Monday morning and will send it to everyone in year 12 and 13. I will also put it on Show My Homework and the College website. If you have any feedback - I would love to hear it. Are there better ways we can keep in touch with you?

I have heard some great inspirational stories over the last few weeks from several of you. Many of you are working extra shifts in your part-time jobs to cover staff who are ill or self-isolating. Lots of you are taking on extra carer roles in your homes to support other members of your family or friends. I would just like to say a huge thank you. What you are doing is greatly appreciated. Keep doing it and keep safe.

In last week's message I stressed the importance of establishing a routine each day. How did it go? Please let me know if there is anything you are struggling with and we can help. To remind you, last week's advice was:

- Get up and dressed for the day
- Set up a dedicated work-space
- Define a To Do list each day
- Take breaks
- Exercise
- Relax
- Stay connected with each other

Every few days there seem to be new announcements about exams and exam results. This week it was confirmed that A Level Results Day will be on Thursday 13th August. I will be in the Sixth Form Common Room from 10.00 until 1.30 to give out your results. Results can only be given to you in person. If someone is collecting your results for you they need to have written permission from you. We cannot email results or give them out on the phone. If you can't get in and will need them posted home, can you please contact me and I can make sure we have your up-to-date contact details. It will be brilliant to see all year 13 students again on Results Day and share in celebrating your success.

At the moment teachers are deciding on calculated grades. We have until 29th May to do this. Year 13 students do not need to send in any more work. Please do not ask us what grade we are recommending for you. We are not allowed to tell you. This is also happening for Year 12 students who were expecting to do AS, BTEC and CAMTEC exams this summer. You will still be set work in those subjects but it will be for the next parts of your course.

I have had a number of emails recently from UCAS and universities. For Year 13 students UCAS have extended the deadline by which you have to make decisions on the offers you have received. You will need to reply to all offers by 6pm on 18th June. If you are unsure what to choose, please let me know. I am very happy to talk through your options with you. You do still need to do your Student Finance application if you haven't started it yet. Again let me know if I can help in any way. For those of you who have made your decisions, check with the university you want to go to. Several of them have already started to suggest activities and online courses you could do to prepare yourself for university. The University of Exeter has just today launched its 'Discover University' programme. You can follow them on Twitter at @DiscoverUniExe and on Facebook at www.facebook.co/DiscoverUniExe.

For Year 12 UCAS will open for you in a few weeks time. The application process for you begins on 19th May. I will give you details in that week of how you can register with UCAS and get started on looking at universities. Lots of universities are looking at doing Virtual Open Days this year and I will send you details of them as they come in. For now, keep looking at Unifrog to research possible courses, universities and career possibilities.

This is a new situation and a new way of teaching and learning for all of us. Nobody has done this before so we are all experimenting - which is very exciting. I would really like some feedback about what is working and what isn't.

- We are using Show My Homework to set all work - can you access it?
- Do the instructions we give you make sense?
- Are we giving you enough work to do?
- Are we giving you too much?
- Some teachers are recording lessons, using different platforms to record over powerpoints - how do you feel about those?
- In Psychology, Mrs Penter has set up a Google Classroom group - how is this working for you?

We are looking closely at using Google Classrooms more so want to know how we can improve it. The truth is that it looks like we may be remote learning for some time yet and my number one priority is making sure that you get the best quality teaching you can in these circumstances. If things are working well - let me know and I can share it with everyone. If there are problems - let me know and I will do my very best to fix them.

Many of you will have some extra spare time at the moment. I can strongly recommend Future Learn - www.futurelearn.com. It is a free online learning course with a huge range of courses. It only takes a few minutes to set up and you can enrol for as many courses as you like. I will be asking all Year 12 students to sign up for a course on the EPQ - the Extended Project Qualification next week. Many of the courses are run by British Universities. If you are in year 13 and going to University later this year, have a look if there are any courses linked to the course you will be starting in September - it would be a great way to get ahead and be ready for your new studies.

One final thing. As you will remember each year the whole College runs the Memorial Mile in May. This was set up several years ago in memory of the brilliant Mr Feast following his sad and untimely death. Mr Feast was a Science teacher here for many years and also a Sixth Form Tutor. This year we were due to run it on Friday 1 May. We will not be in College now on that day but there are plans to run/walk a “Virtual Feasty Mile” this year. You can run or walk it wherever you are able to do and it is safe and you can keep a social distance. We hope to set up a way to record photos and videos of staff and students doing their mile and are looking at ways we can use this to raise money for a good cause. Have a think - any suggestions please let me know.

Have a good week. I am working from home all week and will respond to emails as quickly as I can. Keep safe, keep busy and keep looking after each other.

Best wishes

J Golding
Head of Sixth Form