



THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

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Headteacher: Mr A McGinnes

20 March 2020

Dear Year 13,

I wanted to update you as best we can with the daily changes that are occurring in the education system that inevitably are having a direct impact on you.

I am overwhelmed with pride in the way you are responding and adapting to change. When you joined the Sixth Form seventeen months ago, we made a commitment to each other: "To ensure you leave Sixth Form with the best grades you could achieve; you explore and exploit opportunities on offer to you; you explore and exploit the opportunities you make for yourself and if you do all of this, you will leave on the best career pathway possible." I am committed, more than ever, to fulfil this promise.

Over the coming weeks, you will need to continue working closely with your teachers; complete the coursework and complete your courses to the highest standard. Work with us to ensure the grades you achieve are a reflection of your potential. Demonstrate your integrity and resilience in working through the issues this situation has presented us with.

You will be expected to have contact with your form tutor each week so we can review how things are going for you and we will be using your feedback to further improve aspects of remote working for you. This is new territory for us all and we will be using your feedback to develop our best practice.

There has been no official confirmation of how grades will be awarded yet, but it is expected that these will be largely based on Teacher Assessment. The Government has promised more information regarding this in the near future. Once we have this information, we will inform you of the revised arrangements. It is therefore, really important that you continue to complete the work set, as this will help inform your teachers' assessment of your attainment in your different subjects. Teachers will obviously take into account the impact of the disruption to your education and the impact self-study may have on students' progress, especially those with additional needs who may find remote learning even more of a challenge.

As we navigate ourselves towards remote teaching and learning, we as a school will be working tirelessly to ensure that all the opportunities you have volunteered for and organised yourself, will not go unrecognised. We already have ideas on how we can help reflect your individual character, knowledge and skills in a professional format, to present to future employers and education settings to enable them to fully appreciate your strengths and how you would be an asset to their corporation(s).

If you are unsure about how UCAS applications will continue, contact the relevant university for guidance. Please keep us informed on what is happening with your application. If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate in contacting Mr Cunningham.

The Buckingham School is concerned that every student should have the opportunity to attend school activities/obtain equipment, regardless of their financial circumstances. As such, it may be possible to subsidise those students who would otherwise be unable to attend trips/purchase items. Please feel free to write in confidence to Mrs K Bones at kbones@buckinghamsschool.org, if you wish to seek assistance, or obtain more information about Pupil Premium funding.



If you do not have an apprenticeship, job or university application already organised for June, again, please contact Mr Cunningham. We have a wealth of careers advice and guidance to support you in your next steps. We can keep you updated with opportunities.

If you are in receipt of Bursary funding, please email Mrs Gibson-Smith and Mrs Bones regarding the balance you have left and how you would like to spend it.

The Student First team will remain as ever, supportive of your wellbeing needs. If you have any concerns or issues that arise you can contact your form tutor, Mrs Gibson-Smith or myself. If you receive support from the Student First team this will continue remotely and you will have been contacted about how this will work to support your needs. If you have been absent and have not spoken to staff you would usually check in with, please make contact with them.

There are some practical things you can do to ease worries or concerns you may have about the Coronavirus. Social media can portray a skewed and ill-informed version of the situation. Go to sources you know are trustworthy and ignore misinformation, rumours or fake news.

Look after your mental health. With all of the misinformation and panic that can be experienced, it's important to look after yourself. If you feel you are becoming overwhelmed or worrying about what is going on, talk to a member of your family or a friend. Talking about things WILL make it better.

Groups that can offer you some support should you need it.

- www.kooth.com - Free, safe and anonymous online counselling and support
- The Samaritans - Phone 116 123
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799> - Good advice from the BBC

Continue to be kind and look after people who may need your help. Make time listening and talking to people who you think might be feeling low. There may be people within your wider community that you can help and support.

It is important to remember this is a national situation, affecting thousands of students across the country and the Government has stressed that students will not be disadvantaged. More guidance will come out over the coming days and weeks. We will communicate with you regularly. Keep to your routines and follow your online timetable as if you were in school.

The Sixth Form has been highly commended in the recent Ofsted inspection, they hold your teachers and the students in very high regard. We have a great track record of achievement for our students. The Sixth Form team is stronger than ever. This will all count in your favour. Take pride and passion in the work you complete, remain fully engaged with your teachers and take ownership in the areas of your education you have control over.

As always if you have any queries or issues, please do not hesitate in contacting me. We will complete Y13 together. You will leave with grades that reflect your achievements, with evidence of enrichment opportunities you participated in or organised and we will support you in your career pathways.

With my very best wishes,

Mrs S Pykett
Director of Sixth Form
spykett@buckinghamschool.org

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