

9 October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I wanted to write to you to let you know how students have settled back into their A' level/BTEC studies since their return in September and to make you aware of the ongoing support to which your son/daughter has access. On the whole students have really embraced being back in school, although I think the reality of this week's assessments may have taken the shine off their return slightly! It really has been lovely to have students back in and they have coped remarkably with the new routines and procedures we have in place. Whilst it has been difficult for those having to self-isolate, we are incredibly proud of how they have continued to study at home, accessing online lessons and even completing assessments. Thank you for your support with this. The vast majority of students are working our recommended 40-hour week, but we know some may still benefit from a little extra encouragement with this. To help those who may find it tricky to work at home, we have recently started to allow students to stay and work in the upper hexagon until 5.00pm each evening.

We are now well underway with our UCAS process and this week we have shared with students their predicted UCAS grades. Understandably, these grades have been a little more challenging to calculate due to such disruption to their studies at the end of Year 12, plus we were unable to conduct formal mock examinations at the end of the year. Teachers have worked hard to work out the best possible predictions taking all factors into account. We always try to predict the highest grade we possibly can, giving students the very best chance of securing university offers. We must stress that due to the optimistic aspect of UCAS predictions, it is really important for students to try and choose courses with a range of entry requirements when making their choices. We strongly recommend that students have at least one back up option, should they not secure the grades in the summer which their first choice university requires. Students are encouraged to speak to their subject teachers in the first instance if they wish to adjust their predicted grades. If there are any queries with regards to their predictions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Those students applying for early entry will have already paid and sent their UCAS application and this will be sent by the school before the 15 October deadline. All other students should aim to send their UCAS applications by October half term. Students have been reminded in their form time session this week that once they pay and send, this simply means their application comes to us as a school to process. The school will send their application once the student has checked and signed their application off, confirming receipt of the predicted grades we have issued. We ask for your support in ensuring students send these applications by the deadline as, although the official UCAS deadline is not until 15 January, we check each application thoroughly and this does take time. We do recognise that students are in a difficult position this year with regards to making their choices but there is plenty of support from us and also from UCAS which is running virtual experiences in different subjects (find out more [here](#)). We recognise the challenges of not being able to visit universities, so we urge you to make the most of the online open days (dates of which can be found [here](#)). Students have received lots of support with their personal statements and this should now be in the very latter stages of completion. Students should already have shown their first draft to their referee and they will now be making their final changes. We have access to an impartial personal statement checking service through a contact with an admissions tutor at

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Huddersfield University. Details of this service have been published on their weekly bulletin, so please do ask them to share this with you.

The earlier that applications are sent to UCAS, the earlier students will receive offers. In the current circumstances we are aware that there may be more applicants this year, so we encourage students to pay and send as soon as possible. For those students who are not applying to university, we have an apprenticeship talk arranged for Thursday 15th October during form time, which will highlight how to search for an apprenticeship and how to make a competitive application. In addition to this, our careers advisor, who is currently working remotely, is available every Tuesday and any student interested in speaking to her should see Mrs Littler on student services to make an appointment.

We have made some changes to our Life Programme sessions this year and these seem to have gone down well with students. These sessions will now be more frequent, delivered by form tutors and they will include a variety of different topics. So far, we have had sessions on mental health and we have launched our Wellness Hub on Teams. Please do ask your son/daughter to share this with you as it is a fantastic resource to support mental wellbeing. In line with Mental Health Awareness Week this week, students attended a virtual assembly which also outlined ways to keep themselves healthy. Prior to this, we have run sessions on drugs and decision making, which will be followed with another session next week delivered by an external speaker.

Our Student Leadership Team has started the year well with its first charity fundraiser for Macmillan and despite not being able to hold a coffee morning live, students still managed to raise our highest amount yet - £577! Thank you to all of you who donated. We hope to adopt the same approach on Wear It Pink day on Friday 23 October. To sit alongside this event, we have arranged an external speaker to deliver virtual sessions on breast and testicular examinations, as we felt that it is important for students to know how to keep themselves healthy.

Please can I remind you that all students should attend from 8:25am each day and they must attend form time on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:10-12:45pm. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays students are able to leave at 12:10pm, providing they do not have lessons or supervised study periods in the afternoon. On Tuesdays and Thursdays after form time, they may leave at 12:45pm if they have no lessons or supervised study periods in the afternoon. Students are reminded that they should wear business dress at all times. Now the weather is turning colder, we are happy to allow students to wear a plain black v-neck jumper, but this is only to be worn in addition to, not instead of, their blazer. We would also appreciate your support in ensuring students wear suitable footwear to school; trainers are not allowed. Students should wear a face covering during lesson changeover and social times when they are not eating. It is essential they bring their own (and ideally a spare in case of loss/breakage) and they adhere to these guidelines carefully.

Our staff are keen to meet with you to discuss your son/daughter's progress to date and we are looking forward to inviting you to our Year 13 Parents' Evening on Thursday 5th November. This is most likely to be a virtual event and I will be in touch before half term to explain how this will work.

We look forward to working with our Year 13 students throughout their final year at Lymm. As ever, if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely



H JENNINGS (Mrs)
Head of Sixth Form
Assistant Headteacher