



19 May 2020

Dear Students and Parents/Carers

I wanted to write to you in these challenging times to share some important information regarding **UCAS Applications**. The UCAS online application system is now open and running. It will operate in the same way as it has done in previous years. Many of our students will be considering this routeway and ordinarily we would be able to speak to them all and answer a range of questions. Sadly, this year we will have to conduct this virtually, yet I hope they and you will still find this useful.

Firstly, I would ask that **all Year 12 students** create an application even if they decide not to submit it; we have learnt that students often change their minds. Even if they are certain they do not want to go to University there are some important steps in the application process which will be beneficial for all our students as they consider their next steps.

I wanted to make you aware of the important events and dates that are coming up as we prepare our students for their next steps post Year 13. In all of these we would ask that you work with them to support both, meeting the deadline, and creating Personal Statements that really show their strengths and qualities.

UCAS Application:

- All Year 12 students have had an account set up for them. To access this they should go to <https://www.ucas.com/students> and sign in for **Undergraduate**. **IMPORTANT – be sure to sign in for 2021 entry (not 2020 which is last years!)**
- They will find a range of steps that need to be completed. Check the boxes on the left next to each subtitle. They will be ticked green when you have completed this section.
- When all sections are complete you will need to submit a payment, (this will not come until the end of the process so October or December): £20 for a single choice **we recommend £26 for multiple choices**
- At this stage I will be able to enter both the student reference and predicted grades. When this is done the application will be complete.

Deadlines:

- Students applying for **Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry** have to submit early. They have been told that this should all be completed for **Friday October 2nd** for me to check. The UCAS deadline is **Tuesday 13th October**. All of these applications must be made by these dates.
- **All other UCAS Applications** must be completed before Christmas. The deadline is **Friday 18th December**.

How can I support?

- **UCAS** – Sit with them and go through the application form with them.
- **University Choices** – Please support them in looking at University prospectuses online. This site is a good place to start. <https://www.whatuni.com>



- Be sure that they begin to investigate a **range of choices** with a range of potential offers. We don't want all five choices to be for 3 x Bs when they have predicted grade of BBC and for them to miss out. They should have an aspiration, but also a back-up plan.
- **Personal Statement** – This is their responsibility, but please support them by proof reading it. It should primarily focus on their Academic credentials – specifically linked to their University choice to begin with. It should then look at other areas of strength both in school and out. About 65%-70% focused in school and 25-30% out is a good way to start.
- There are lots of guides out there – but the main thing is to get started. Have a look at some guidance: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement>
- **It cannot be over 4000 characters** – use word count to check you are under!

What if I don't want to go through UCAS?

- We recognise that some of our students want to choose a different pathway. However, if you think there is a chance that University may be for you we would recommend that you apply.
- **Apprenticeships** – If you are considering this route-way start looking at your options now. <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk>

Finally – we recognise that these Year 12s are becoming adults. Ultimately, we believe that this is their responsibility to get this all done. However, we also understand that many of them will need support through this, especially at such a difficult time.

They are getting guidance from me, and have been emailed the “**Next Steps Booklet 2020**” to support them with the whole process. However, your guidance and support is vital, so please do your best to support them at home, especially as regards meeting the deadlines. This is a life lesson. Very simply there will be no extensions to this process as far as we know at the present time. Of course, if anything changes due to COVID-19 we will communicate this to them and you.

Thank you for your support with this. If you have any questions, please let us know how the Sixth Form Team can support you and we will do our best.

Yours sincerely

Aidan Blowers

Director of Sixth Form – Assistant Head teacher