



PRESDALES SCHOOL

Achievement for all

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Dear Parents/Carers

It has been so nice to welcome the students back into Sixth Form and whilst we know many of them were anxious about the new 'bubble' system and also what the academic year ahead will hold for them, they seem very happy to be back. We have welcomed Mr Britton to the Sixth Form Team and he has taken up the position of Head of Year 12. Mrs Finch is the Head of Year 13 and Mrs Preshous is our Sixth Form Administrator. Plus, we still have 12 tutor groups, with 17 experienced tutors.

Assessments/Mocks

As you are aware Year 13 have just completed two weeks of in class assessments and they will receive the results for these over the next couple of weeks. These assessments will help the teachers identify any gaps in knowledge and will also contribute, along with assessment results from Year 12, to the students' UCAS predicted grades. Year 13 would usually sit mock exams in December but due to the September assessments taking place, we have moved these to January (4th – 15th). Whilst this isn't ideal, as it will involve the students having to revise during the Christmas holidays, we felt it would have been unfair to give them two sets of assessments in the Autumn term, given that they had been out of school for so long. Therefore, the students will have a 'Mock Results Day' on Thursday 4th February 2021.

Mental Health

Sixth Form can be a difficult time for students as they navigate their way through their A Levels, decide on a career path as well as handling life as they enter adulthood, plus this year we have to add in the additional pressures as a consequence of coronavirus. Therefore, it is even more important that the students talk to us if they have any concerns. Support is always on hand from form tutors and the Sixth Form team, plus we have an in-house counsellor who works 3 days a week and we can make a referral for a student to see her. Whilst students are working towards academic outcomes, their health and wellbeing is just as important.

UCAS

During lockdown the students were provided with a lot of information regarding the UCAS process including step by step instructions on how to complete the application form. Tutors are currently supporting students with their Personal Statements and the Academic References have been written. We know it is difficult to choose which universities to apply to, and this is made even more difficult with the universities being unable to hold Open Days. Many are providing virtual tours on their websites and it may be useful to visit the area where the universities are to enable your child to get a feel for the area.

The students will receive their predicted grades in early October and we strongly advise them to think carefully about their five choices. We are aware that there may be more competition for places for next September with international students applying who weren't able to start university this year, as well as students who deferred their place to next year.

Regarding their five choices, it would be sensible to make two aspirational choices, two choices in line with predicted grades and one choice as a backup. For example, if a student is predicted ABB they might make the following choices:

Aspirational – 1 choice of AAA and 1 choice of AAB

In line – 2 choices of ABB

Back up – 1 choice of BBB

This way they are likely to get at least three to four offers and the higher aspirational choice (AAA) is still within reach.

There are three main deadlines for UCAS:

- **Applications for OxBridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine/Science – 15th October 2020**
- **All other applications – 15th January 2021** – we strongly advise for students to send their applications off in November, at the latest in December.
- **Accepting offers – early May 2021**

Applications for student finance usually opens in January/February and have to be submitted by the end of May. Information about student finance can be found [here](#).

Apprenticeships

Each year more students are choosing not go to university as there are more alternative options available. Apprenticeship opportunities have increased in the last few years and many are more appealing to students than going to university. Apprenticeships tend to be advertised in the Spring for a September start. Due to the impact of the global pandemic there may not be as many apprenticeship opportunities available, so we strongly advise students to apply to university so they at least have one option available to them and they can always decline their offers if they are able to secure an apprenticeship.

The best place to look for apprenticeships are:

Unifrog - <https://www.unifrog.org/>

Governments Apprenticeship Website - <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

AIM Apprenticeships – students can sign up to the company and they will help them to find apprenticeships - <https://www.theaimgroup.co.uk/>

Dress Code

Year 13 are generally looking smart, however, please can I remind you that facial piercings are not allowed in the Sixth Form and students will be expected to remove them.

Part Time Employment

We are aware that a number of students have a part time job and whilst this has many benefits, we strongly advise that students work no more than 10 hours per week, as anything over this tends to have a negative impact on school achievement. Part time work should not be carried out during school hours.

Now the students are back in school I really hope the academic year goes ahead as smoothly as possible. Please do email me (SimmondsK@presdales.herts.sch.uk) or Mrs Finch (FinchC@presdales.herts.sch.uk) if you have any further questions.

Mrs K Simmonds

Head of Sixth Form