

6 May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Higher Education and Apprenticeships

Firstly I hope that you and your family are well. We miss the students and our work routines enormously and cannot wait to see them all again! Although it may feel quite strange right now, we are aware that we need to begin to look forward towards next year and the future of our Year 12 students. We had intended to hold our annual 'Destinations Evening' for students and parents on Monday 1 June. With that event disappointingly no longer a possibility, I would like to provide some information and clarity to you regarding Higher Education and apprenticeships.

Unifrog

We have a subscription here at Alderbrook Sixth Form to the online platform Unifrog, which is an absolutely superb tool for researching, collating and drafting applications for university and apprenticeships. Your child should have been sent a 'welcome' email from Unifrog which will allow them to login in and get signed up. I have also sent out the following link - which is a short introductory video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZS2tn_3LGU. Please encourage your child to get signed up and start to navigate the platform, in an investigative and exploratory way for now. <https://www.unifrog.org/>

UCAS

Clearly, in these difficult times, we cannot be certain about exactly when UCAS deadlines will be set for the next academic year. However, traditionally the application deadline for Oxbridge/Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary courses has been mid-October and all other applications mid-January. Despite this, as a school we have our own internal deadlines due to the logistics of completing this important and time-consuming process. During 2019 these were staggered, and took place in October, November and December - with all applications sent to UCAS by the start of the Christmas holidays - giving both students and teachers the chance to relax into the festive period! Please have a look here at the UCAS website, <https://www.ucas.com/>, to access a large selection of free videos and resources for students.

Personal Statements

As previously mentioned, we aim to ease the process by staggering UCAS applications. Under normal circumstances, we expect students to have uploaded a full draft of their Personal Statement on Unifrog by the end of the summer term. Now is a great time to get going with this! Unifrog, UCAS and YouTube contain a great wealth of information on how

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to (and how not to!) compile a great Personal Statement. We have a 'Destinations' Tab on our own Sixth Form website with useful links down the right hand side including: http://www.alderbrooksixthform.org/downloads/University_of_Essex_personal_statement_writing_guide.pdf. Alongside these online resources, Form Tutors are the first port of call for support; they will be happy to read and advise with Personal Statements. I am also available to offer support in my role as Head of Year 13 and designated UCAS Coordinator.

Oxbridge

Mrs Moreton-Wright (Oxford Alumna) is our designated Oxbridge Advisor and will be available (via email for the time being!) to offer support, guidance and coaching to those students who have aspirations to study at one of these institutions. Mrs Morton-Wright has already sent an invitation email to all Year 12 students and we have been pleased with the interest from students keen to learn more and take part in the Society programme. Students who are considering applying to Oxford or Cambridge need to be aware that they are only able to make an application to one of these institutions.

Open Days

Understandably, in the current climate, universities are unable to provide the Open Day experience for prospective students that they would ordinarily offer. However, many are offering 'Virtual Open Days' online which are well-worth looking out for.

Apprenticeships

For some of you, an apprenticeship might not have crossed your mind as an option, or you may recognise the name but be unsure where it can lead. An apprenticeship is a great way to enter a host of careers, whilst earning a salary and developing the necessary skills and knowledge for that role. Apprenticeships provide a viable alternative to university. However, apprenticeships can lead to a degree, either as part of an apprenticeship programme (Level 6) or as the next step after completion (often with employer support). There is a useful resource on our website at the following link: http://www.alderbrooksixthform.org/downloads/Uni_Appr_guide2019_web2.pdf. Students can also use Unifrog to research apprenticeship opportunities as we also subscribe to that tool in our package. In the last couple of years we have had students going on to complete Degree Apprenticeships – they are extremely competitive and not to be considered as an 'easier' route to Higher Education.

Facebook & Twitter

Please be aware that Mrs Allen keeps the Alderbrook Sixth Form Facebook and Twitter pages up-to-date extremely regularly! Details about Open Days, online training, national competitions, virtual work experience and much more are posted on here daily, so please keep checking. Twitter: @ABKSixthForm Facebook: Alderbrook Sixth Form

I hope that our students are able to use this time to carefully consider their future aspirations, alongside keeping up with their subject study and school work of course! I will keep in contact with Year 12 regarding the UCAS process and eventual deadlines for personal statement drafts via email. Please ensure your child is checking their Sixth Form account regularly. The whole Sixth Form Team at Alderbrook (health permitting) are always available via email to answer any of your questions or queries.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Claire Howard
Assistant Director of Sixth Form:
Head of Year 13 & UCAS Coordinator