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music college

18th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a real pleasure to welcome year 13 back to school for the first half term of what will be their final year at NSG. This time last year no one could have imagined how their time in year 12 would pan out and the obstacles they would need to overcome. I was very proud of how the year group rose to the challenges that confronted them during Lockdown and equally proud of the way they have conducted themselves on their return to school; they have been excellent role models for the younger students and the new year 12 students alike.

The effects of the Covid pandemic remain a challenge for staff and students at school and it is important that all students adhere to the measures put in place to keep everyone safe. As you know, Year 13 students are now expected to be on site for taught lessons only (unless they have travel arrangements which require them to stay in school at other times). We have brought in this measure to maintain the safety of our students in communal areas of the sixth form block. Whilst at school, sixth form students are in a separate 'bubble' from the rest of the school and we do ask that they avoid contact with students in other 'bubbles'. There are one way systems in the sixth form and science blocks used by our bubble. We also expect students to wear face coverings when moving around corridors. Additionally we do ask that students, where possible, maintain social distancing in the communal areas. I am pleased to say these measures have been working well but students need to remain vigilant and stick to the guidance.

This September we have, for the first time, moved from Year 13 students being in tutor groups to having an individual mentor. Our aim is for each student to meet their mentor regularly and for the mentor to support them through the process of deciding upon their future pathway, be that university, apprenticeship or a full time job. Mentors are also there to look after the wellbeing of your daughter/son and to bring to my attention any issues that need to be addressed. It is therefore important that each student attends their scheduled mentoring session, arranged by their mentor, to ensure they reap the full benefits of these individual one to one sessions.

To supplement the mentoring sessions all students were invited, before the summer break, to join the shared Google Drive 'Future Pathways 2020 to 2021'. This Drive contains a series of folders that in turn contain information on key areas such as:

- Universities, UCAS and Personal Statements
- Apprenticeships and Alternatives to University
- Student Finance

The whole year group also has access to the Year 13 Google Classroom where important information is posted. This, along with emails, is the most effective way to disseminate information and I would like to ask for your help in reminding your daughter/son to check both daily.

**Headteacher:** Cristina Taboada-Naya  
**Deputy Headteachers:** Abigail Boddy, Catherine Carré



I am sure that you will have already had conversations with your daughter/son about the route they are considering post-18. It may be that at the moment your daughter/son is unable to narrow down their course choice or where they want to study but the key is that they *can change their mind*. The organisation responsible for all UK university applications is called UCAS and the following link takes you to the part of their website that is specifically for parents. Here you will find lots of information and resources including videos and downloadable pdfs to help you to support you and your child through the process.

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/ucas-undergraduate-advice-parents-and-guardians>

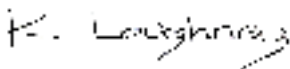
If your child is not considering university they still need to complete the UCAS process as the personal details sections of the application along with the personal statement are very similar to a CV and letter of application that they would need to produce for an apprenticeship/job. Completing the form at this stage also allows students currently not considering university the option to change their mind at a later date.

Year 13 will be completing their first assessments of the year next week in all their subjects, in order for the staff to ascertain how they can best support students to bridge any gaps in skills or knowledge caused by the lockdown period. Students should not worry about these assessments; they are taking place in timetabled lessons, rather than in exam venues and are just one of many measures of student progress staff may use to inform UCAS predicted grades.

On Monday morning Year 13 attended a socially-distanced assembly where Mrs Green, our new Director of Sixth Form, ran through some key points and dates pertinent to this term. She also gave reassurance that our aim is to do the best that we can to support our Year 13 students in these uncertain times and to allay any fears they may have. Obviously, as a school, we are at the behest of outside agencies and events but it is our aim to be completely transparent and share any information with you as soon as we are able. We have not yet received definitive guidance from the government regarding next summer's exam period, but rest assured that as a school we are absolutely committed to ensuring our students are in the best possible position to move on to their preferred post-18 option, whatever the exam season 'looks like' in 2021.

Finally, I would once again like to reiterate how lovely it has been to have the year group back in school; their positivity, optimism and enthusiasm have been so pleasing to see.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Karen Loughney  
Head of Year 13

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