

29 January 2021

Dear Year 11 parents, carers and students

An update for Year 11

I hope my letter finds you well and you and your child are continuing to be safe during this lockdown period.

Thank you for all your support in helping your child engage with remote learning. We know that it would be better all round for all students to be in school. We look forward to the day when that will be the case again – we miss having all students in school.

You will have heard the Prime Minister's announcement this week that schools will not reopen to all students until at least Monday 8 March and that ahead of confirming the actual return date schools, parents and students will be given at least two weeks' notice. Until such time, our live and recorded lessons and live form time every day at 12.45 pm (this is compulsory and is a safeguarding check) is how we will continue.

We do not have any further detail on how the national return to schools will happen and rather than speculate on this I will commit to writing to you as soon as we know a date for Year 11 and what our plan will be for them in the important weeks and months ahead. We will arrange another webinar ahead of the return date.

As I mentioned last week, your child will have started being asked to complete assessments by their teachers as part of their work at home. The completion of all their work and these assessments will help us to arrive at a fair and well-informed final teacher assessment grade in June.

It is really important that **all students engage in all their lessons**. We have been taking a close look at how each student is engaging in each of their subjects. You will receive a report via the *Parent App* next week relating to engagement with lockdown learning and we will then follow up with **a remote parents' evening on Monday 8 February between 3.00 pm and 6pm**. Please sign up for your slot by accessing our *Parents' Evening Booking System* found here: <https://lowtonchurchofengland.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

I know that learning from home is far from ideal and we can see very clearly that engagement in remote lessons is variable. Some students are working really hard and this is paying off in the quality of work we are seeing and the indicative grades being assigned to their work.

For some, engagement is too low and this is adversely impacting on what grades they will be able to achieve later this year. At this point in Year 11, whether in school or not, the importance of maximising the grades students are working at will have a significant impact on the choices they are able to make for next year. Let me stress once more that the grades your child will be awarded will be based on the work we have seen and been able to assess not what we think they could achieve.

Please get in touch with your child's form tutor or Ms Busek (Head of Year 11) if there is any more we can do to help you at home.

Finally, we were pleased to receive votes for our parent governor vacancy and I am delighted to inform you that Mrs Helen Tracey has been elected as Parent Governor and her 4-year term begins from 27th January 2021.

Yours faithfully

Kieran Larkin
Headteacher

CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING

A reminder for students on effective home learning and our expectations across all subjects.

- Try to retain the structure of a normal school day and timetable.
- Start lesson 1 at 8.35 am.
- Take a mid-morning break at 10.15 am and have lunch as you would in school.
- Spend 50 minutes on the work from each recorded lesson.
- Check all your notifications on SatchelOne to ensure you are reading and acting on the feedback from teachers.
- Use the examples given in the video lessons and the work shared during live lessons and feedback from staff given on Satchel One to improve or develop your work.
- Keep in touch with your teachers and ask for help if you are finding the work difficult.
- Attend live form time each day – this is compulsory and is a safeguarding check.
- **Make sure the work in each assessed activity is of the highest standard you can achieve.**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Year 11 Careers Parent and Student Webinar - 18th January 2021

1. How will I find out when my child's careers appointment is? Will I be told in advance?

Careers appointments will continue to go ahead with the school careers advisor each Monday. She will email students directly with the time and date. This information will also be shared with form tutors so they can remind pupils. Students will usually have notice of the appointment time and date. Interviews can take place via MS Teams or telephone.

2. What happens if my son/daughter has missed their college interview?

The college will make contact directly with the student. They will usually follow up with school to check that they have the correct contact information if this has not been possible. Students could also contact the college and explain that they need a new appointment.

3. What is the difference between a conditional and unconditional offer?

A conditional offer means that the college have offered and reserved a place for you on the course, but this is dependent on you achieving the entry requirements for the course. An unconditional offer is one that is not dependent on grades, however references will still be taken up so attainment, attendance and attitude remain critical to maintain the place offered.

4. If there is a Level 2 and a Level 3 Apprenticeship course, can you aim high and apply for the Level 3 straight from school if you think your grades will allow, or do you need to do the Level 2 first then progress onto Level 3?

Courses that lead to apprenticeships exist at Level 1, 2 and 3. Students should apply for the level that their grades will allow entry to. If students do not achieve the correct grades, colleges sometimes offer them an alternative level of course. Aim high, but have a back up plan. Some employers run bespoke apprenticeship training courses that are age, not qualification, dependent if students are successful at securing a position with them.

5. Do we apply for college on line? What are the deadlines for applications?

College applications can be made on line using the college website or by completing the application forms in the prospectus. These are usually found at the back and can be posted to the college. School has run application workshops and will hold another this half term if there is any student demand to do so. College deadlines vary. The earliest was Saint John Rigby but they have announced this week they will be moving this date back to the beginning of March. We will continue to update application closing dates in the bulletin, or students can find this information on the college websites.

6. How can we arrange work experience? Where can we get this information from?

Information on work experience opportunities will be shared with form tutors and posted on the website.

Students will need to register an interest and apply for these if they are interested in completing them using the contact information provided

7. What is Xello and how do I log on?

Xello is a careers app that allows students to search, track and learn more about themselves, and suitable careers or those of interest. It has lessons, questionnaires and an extensive database of careers, earning potential and typical duties. It can be accessed on line by searching Xello. Student log in details and a guide on how to use and access this app can be found on the careers section of the school website.

8. How can my child access the careers bulletin?

The careers bulletin is sent to form tutors to share with the students in their form. It is also uploaded to the careers section of the school website. This document contains the times, dates and links of upcoming careers events that colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers have shared with us.

9. If on results day the grades achieved are lower than we thought, what is the process and timescale for finding an alternative course?

School have a careers advisor and some college representatives at the event to assist with this should it be needed. We also look at student results and identify possible post 16 issues and alternatives to discuss with students on the day. We will continue to support our students to secure appropriate an appropriate course. Colleges can take a student on to roll all the way up to September, but this will depend on the availability of places on the course. Colleges will also work with you to help advise and guide students to the next steps for enrolment.