

13 July 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

As the summer term draws to a close I wanted to write to you to reflect on what has been an extremely unusual year both for the College and the country as a whole. Whilst it has been nice to see many of our students in recent weeks, it will be a great moment when I can welcome back everyone for the start of teaching on 7<sup>th</sup> September. I am optimistic that I will be able to do this in September and that it will be a relatively 'normal' start to the new academic year.

The government's guidance, issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, suggests that with a mix of physical distancing and enhanced hygiene, together with engagement with Test and Trace processes, students will be safe to return and experience a full education. I am currently reviewing our risk assessments and planning how best to put the government guidance into practice. I will share these plans with you before the start of the new academic year. Let us hope that the virus does not return to the extent that further restrictions have to be reintroduced, but should it do so we have planned for how we would cope with this and I am confident that we have the expertise and resources to ensure that your son or daughter is supported and makes the progress needed to be successful.

You will recall that during the period of closure we asked for your feedback on communications and support for remote learning both to find out what we were doing well and what we could do to improve and I was grateful for your feedback. The comments were very positive and supportive and the areas identified for improvement have helped us to develop strategies for use in September so that we can match and exceed the support for teaching and learning that we have offered up until now. As the government intention is that external exams will take place next summer it is crucial that your son or daughter continues to work hard.

We have also had feedback from students which was positive about the College's support over the last four months. We were pleased that so many students took the trouble to respond and that they identified a wide range of methods that teachers have successfully used during lockdown and also suggested areas for us to focus on. You will not be surprised that students did not feel that remote learning was as good as being taught in the classroom and we will reflect on ways that we can boost the confidence and understanding of students on their return to ensure that they are successful next year. Details of the student survey results can be found on the correspondence page of our website.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Over the last few weeks our teachers have been busy taking advantage of training and experimenting with new equipment to make remote learning as interactive as possible to give our students the best chance of success in what will be the most important year of their education so far.

Microsoft Teams is the main way that our teachers and tutors have been supporting students with online learning. Where students need to continue their studies from home we will provide a range of support including live-streamed lessons, interactive discussions, pre-recorded material and a variety of tasks, resources and activities. We have appointed a Digital Learning Co-ordinator, Andy Russell, and he is producing training resources for staff and students to further develop their skills and confidence with this platform. A brief introductory video has been produced which can be viewed here: [www.wsfc.ac.uk/preparing-for-sixth-form-study](http://www.wsfc.ac.uk/preparing-for-sixth-form-study).

In general we have been pleased with the way in which students have engaged with remote learning over the past four months, however, we know that face to face teaching is the best way to learn. Consequently, teachers are identifying ways as to how they can support students in consolidating their learning since lockdown. Given that there will be exams next year it is more important than ever that your son or daughter plays their part to ensure they make a positive start to the new academic year. Teachers have set summer work and your son or daughter should be clear on what is expected of them. They have also been asked to begin work on their personal statement – this is important even if they are not considering applying to university and will prove valuable if they are writing letters of application for apprenticeships or employment.

A letter has been sent home to your son or daughter outlining what they need to do should they need to make changes to their programme of study next year and you can find a copy of this communication on our website.

Finally, I hope that you are able to enjoy a break over the summer.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Senior". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E' and a long, sweeping underline.

Edward Senior  
Principal