COVID-19 Statement: Applications to Higher Education

Sandy Sixth Form students continued to learn remotely to the best of their ability over the lockdown period, with some continued assessment and feedback in all courses. Following the changes to restrictions in June 2020, Sixth Form students were invited to attend two two-hour classes in each of their elected subjects prior to the summer break to begin to address some of the learning gaps and whilst this was considerably less direct teacher input, than had they been in school full time, enabled staff to ensure that students remained engaged in their learning through the summer break. These sessions were well attended, and those who could not attend could access the content of these lessons remotely. We are working closely with the students to mitigate the impact this may have on their progress and feel this should be considered in any application they undertake.

On their return to school full-time in September, as well as their regular face-to-face lessons, students continue to have access to remote learning in the event of non-attendance due to self-isolation or shielding, and if required, reasonable adjustment made to any class or coursework deadlines. Furthermore, individual subject areas hold targeted intervention for students who have been unable to engage with remote learning opportunities in order to minimise further disruption.

The removal of formal summative assessment in year 12 inhibited student understanding of predicted grades and latent potential, pre-public examinations are planned for later in the academic year. The school holds copious data on each individual, drawn from both external and internal assessment. Throughout lockdown students have submitted work in all subjects and this data has been used to triangulate and calculate predicted grades for each course.

Due to the lack of face to face interaction some students have lacked the confidence to make informed choices regarding their higher education options due to limited opportunities to explore progression routes or visit HE open days and the UCAS fair. Weekly pastoral sessions and drop down days have been planned to address the issues whereas in previous years this rapport would have been built during the summer term.

Whilst a handful of students demonstrated initiative by accessing enrichment activities, for example, Summer Schools, which will enhance their application, the majority missed out on those events that would have been afforded them under normal circumstances.

We feel that the application process for higher education has been rushed this year as students did not have the summer break to fully prepare their personal statements or research their choices. In such unprecedented times there is a risk that not all students will achieve their full potential academically and in the pursuit of their ambitions. We are striving to ensure that all of the disruption and any further disruption to their learning will not impact on either their final results or on their successful application to the institutions of their choice.

Autumn 2020