

21 April 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I wanted to provide you with an update from the College now that the extension to the lockdown has been formally announced by the Government.

These are challenging times for all of us, not least students who are feeling uncertain about their future studies, and I wanted to reassure you that we at the College are making every effort to provide a stable, familiar study environment. In addition, we are continuing to provide pastoral support including mental health advice and counselling services. We have also added helpful suggestions for structuring time when studying at home and for taking care of wellbeing to the Study Directory.

I have emailed all first year and one year students to reiterate how important it is that they continue with their studies over the coming weeks.

We would usually undertake a series of 'progression' assessments/exams at this time of year which enable us to provide advice about studies for those students progressing into their second year at College and ascertain a predicted grade. In the current situation, it is not possible for us to do this in the usual way and so instead we will be using the work completed during the year, including in this period of working remotely, to assess their predicted grade.

There may of course be an opportunity to undertake an assessment under exam conditions at College in the future, depending on the ongoing decisions about the lockdown. If this is the case, then we would also be able to use these results to inform the predicted grade.

In my email, I have also highlighted the importance of communicating with us. We appreciate that some students are finding studying remotely more challenging than others and some are also dealing with very difficult personal circumstances. We will of course take all of this into consideration, so it is important that we are aware of any issues. Personal Tutors are available by email, as are the teaching staff, so we are asking students to please let us know if they have any questions, need to discuss work or other issues.

In terms of the approach that we are taking to teaching; all teachers are setting work that equates to 9 hours per week (4.5 hours class time, plus 4.5 hours homework) to ensure that the syllabus is covered at the appropriate pace. Individual teachers are taking a variety of different approaches to lesson delivery depending on the subject. In some (but not all) cases, this involves sessions being delivered online via Google Hangouts Meet or in small group

meetings. In all cases, teachers are available to students by email for support if they are having difficulties. If their teacher is ill, the Curriculum Manager will provide the necessary support and this will be communicated to students.

Student progress is being recorded by teachers and monitored. Where engagement is a concern, interventions are being made by Personal Tutors. We have no current plans to move to a more structured approach (i.e. having lessons at exactly the same time that they would have them normally), because teachers and students have different responsibilities at home which make this difficult or impossible.

We are going to survey the students over the coming days to ascertain how successful our approach has been for them. If necessary, we will reconsider how we are doing things.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to send you and all of your loved ones best wishes from everyone at the College.

Yours sincerely,

**Catherine Cole**  
Principal