



AD LUCEM

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S SCHOOL



24 March 2020

Dear Y11 Students, Parents and Carers,

We recognise what a difficult and unsettling time this is for everyone, and that Y11 students, in particular, have had to make a very difficult adjustment over the last few days. Having recently interviewed many Y11 students, I know how focused you were on achieving success in your exams and I have some sense of how upsetting it must be to have these exams withdrawn as my own daughter is in this same position.

As you will know from Mr Sharpe's email on Saturday, we continue to monitor the situation very closely and as things develop, we will provide further updates on how grades will be awarded for your various courses. We will follow all national guidelines to ensure that this process is fair.

As Head of Sixth Form, I want to offer a few further reassurances. The rest of this message is largely for students who have applied to our sixth form, however some of this will still be of interest and hopefully some help to those intending to leave us. Please also be reassured that we will be writing separately to those students who have not applied to the sixth form to supply them with help and guidance about their next steps in the near future

1. Before the school closure on Friday, we had interviewed over 300 students for places in the Sixth Form. Only a small handful of students have yet to be interviewed and, where that is the case, I will be looking to coordinate a phone interview in the near future.
2. We had just completed the dispatch of offer letters to the majority of students who are joining us from other schools (and who were all interviewed before half-term). We were on the cusp of sending out offer letters to our own Y11 but these were very focused on steering students to target their performance in certain subjects to meet our offers and this content is really redundant now. There will inevitably be a delay now in processing offer letters. Rather than generate further uncertainty, I have taken the step of already contacting those who will not be offered a place in the Sixth Form. If you have not already had this contact you should understand that you will be receiving an offer letter when this can be completed. In all likelihood, this contact will now be via email rather than a formal letter. This is not as I would have liked it, but circumstances have left us with little option on this.
3. To take up places on your chosen courses, students will be required to meet the core entry requirements of 5 passes at Grade 4. There is also some subject specific entry guidance that can be seen on the separate subject pages at:
<https://www.stbarts.co.uk/the-sixth-form/6th-form-prospectus/>.

Clearly, now that exams will not be taking place, students will not be able to drive towards boosting their performance in the next few months in an attempt to meet the entry requirements for the Sixth Form or for certain specific subjects. We recognise how frustrating this must be. We will have to judge an applicant's suitability for particular courses on the grades that teachers will submit to exam boards over the coming months. If we feel, on the basis of these grades, that an applicant is not suited

Andover Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 6JP **Tel:** 01635 521255 **Fax:** 01635 576320 **email:** office@stbarts.co.uk **Web:** www.stbarts.co.uk
Headteacher: Ms J A Mortimore BA (Hons), MA

St Bartholomew's School: a charitable company limited by guarantee Company Number: 07721470 (England and Wales)



to a particular course, there will of course be an opportunity for students (and potentially, parents) to meet with us to discuss this. Our commitment is always to treat each student individually and, this summer more than ever, we will want to explore the particular circumstances of students before making final decisions on their programme of study. We hope to be able to pursue some of these conversations in the summer term but events will determine whether this is possible. Please be assured that, in carrying out these conversations, we will get as much information as we need from those teachers and tutors who know students well within the school in order to inform all individual situations fully and fairly.

4. As school closed last week, we were on the verge of making an important announcement about a new programme for students who do not meet the entry requirement of 5 passes at Grade 4. This replaces the 'Access' programme in our prospectus and offers an exciting and more vocational route for students. We hope to share more information on this in due course.
5. In what is a difficult time for you all, I hope the prospect of Sixth Form offers real hope and excitement. We have a fantastically vibrant and successful Sixth Form, and after a period of forced absence from school, I am sure you will want to embrace all the opportunities and experiences that we offer. We have an Induction Day scheduled for June 26th and we very much hope that this will be able to take place as planned.

It's important that everyone stays busy and active. It's important too that you maintain some momentum that will prepare you for academic study in the Sixth Form. We have had a few initial ideas of useful things to do and will share more thoughts, and some materials on Study Skills with you as things develop:

- September is a long way off and it is important that students try to maintain some sort of routine over the coming weeks and months. One approach that we would recommend is to continue to make use of all the revision materials which students have been provided with for their GCSE exam preparation. Whilst the exams themselves have been cancelled, maintaining good study habits will be very important in the transition to Sixth Form. As indicated in the link within Mr Sharpe's message on Saturday, there are plans being developed nationally for the examination boards to offer modified GCSE exams at an early opportunity in the new academic year. We do not, as yet, know any detail about these and we would also not expect a large number of students to have any need to access these. However, we would still encourage students to try to continue with a study routine.
- For the subjects that you intend to study next year, please take a look at the subject links in the first sidebar on the right of the Sixth Form blog at: <https://stb6th.edublogs.org/>. Please try to read as much of this content as possible. I will be asking teachers to update them so keep an eye out for changes.
- In the Sixth Form, we encourage students to consider following a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) alongside their studies. These are courses designed by universities on a huge range of subjects. You can search for these on the internet. A good place to start is: <https://www.futurelearn.com/>.
- In Y12, students are also given an opportunity to complete an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). This can be on any topic you choose and is completed with supervision. To prepare yourself for this, you might look to do some initial reading and research. To find out more go to: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-project-qualification/level-3/about-level-3-project-qualification.html>.

- I am also looking to explore getting access for you to Unifrog. Sixth Form students are given accounts on this platform and I am looking to bring this forward. It's a great place to start exploring opportunities for life after Sixth Form and a great way to start really looking forward to a bright future. You can find out a little of what is involved at: <https://www.unifrog.org/about>

Finally, I wanted to offer one final note of reassurance. I was going to announce in an assembly to all Y11 that I will not be the Head of Sixth Form next year. Many of you, and your parents, may have picked this up already. It's important that you are aware that, as Deputy Headteacher, I will continue to have oversight of many Sixth Form matters, and certainly in the next few months, I will be absolutely committed to paving the way for an excellent Sixth Form experience for you all. With my colleagues in our expanded sixth form leadership team, I will be working hard to address any queries you may have about subject changes.

Whether or not you will be joining us in the Sixth Form, I wish you all very well over the coming months....and beyond.

Keep safe.

Kind Regards,

Mr A Robbins
Head of Sixth Form