

22 April 2020

Dear all

I hope this email finds you and your families safe and well. Even after four weeks, it's hard to comprehend how much life has changed. In school, we have a routine of sorts with just a few staff and students attending but it's always strange to see empty corridors and classrooms. The study library has never felt so empty! I hope you are all bearing up and that you have come to terms with the sudden end to your time in school. It's been lovely to "bump" into a few of you in Wotton and it's good to hear that you've been staying in touch with each other.

Awarding A level grades

As you will have seen from the email sent on the last day of term 4, the process for awarding grades has been announced. We have spent considerable time working out how this will be managed in school so that we can award the grades that you all deserve. We are being asked to provide *"the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment"*. I want to assure you that the process we have implemented is very thorough. Your teachers, heads of department and I will scrutinise all the assessment data, taking into account your approach, particularly during the latter part of year 13. Schools have been instructed not to share information about the grades awarded.

We will take account of access arrangements such as extra time as well as any other circumstances which we feel may have affected your progress. The paragraph below repeats what I have written before but it should help to reassure you:

At KLB, we feel confident that, having seen our students' work throughout the entire A level course (school closed just 4 ½ school weeks before the start of the exam season – that's barely any time at all) we have a wealth of information that will enable us to award the grades they deserve. Each year, we check our predictions against the actual results. We know how much lift happens between February mocks and the real exams; or between March and the real exams. How many times have you heard me say that there are no surprises on results day!

If you would like to check with me that we are taking account of any specific circumstances, please email me.

We are aware, as you may be, that some schools have agreed to revise/lift grades awarded in light of work submitted after schools closed. The guidance from the Department for Education was very clear: students aren't required to complete any additional work to improve their grade. They didn't say it wasn't allowed but advised against it, saying *"Where additional work has been completed after schools and colleges were closed on 20 March, Heads of Centre should exercise caution where that evidence suggests a change in performance. In many cases this is likely to reflect the circumstances and context in which the work is done."* This is recognising the fact that students will submit work which they claim to be their own, but they could have had help from someone else (e.g. a parent, older sibling, expert of some sort) or used a mark scheme. Clearly, this will advantage these students very unfairly.

Once schools submit their grades, checks will be made against each school's previous results using a range of measures. Any school suggesting that their students are doing much better than they have in previous years will have all the submitted results suppressed. Schools will need to be very careful if they are thinking of doing this because all of their results will be lowered. I doubt many schools will take this risk. We have raised this as a concern with Ofqual.

Results' Day

It has been confirmed that A level results will be released as planned on **Thursday 13 August**, the original date published. Students who feel that their grades from the summer do not reflect their ability will have the opportunity to take their exams in the autumn series or in summer 2021. There is a consultation underway to determine what

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arrangements might be put in place to allow an effective appeals' process. Once this is confirmed, I will let you know. I will write to you again with the arrangements for results day including release times, how to access results if you can't come into school and everything you need to know about accepting university places.

Next steps

As always, I will continue to forward any information I receive about apprenticeship and gap year opportunities. **If you would like any support with applications, let me know.** Mr Penman and the external careers adviser are also available. I can direct you to them or vice versa. Keep checking emails.

University offers

Although the process for awarding grades may be different, the admissions process to confirm places at universities remains broadly similar to previous years. If you received all the decisions by 31 March, you must confirm your firm and insurance choices via UCAS Track before **6pm on 20 May**. This deadline has been extended (previously 4 May) and applies to all UCAS 2020 applicants. UCAS should have contacted each of you directly with this letter and updated changes to your Track page.

<https://view.email.ucas.com/?qs=d17f32c7a7c76b1ec3cf6e94ac39be042b4b907fc54c4ffce1bc195e33c792a2346a5bb389958d291d443490740b81e1abcd94abeda2db53e108613c889b8a07a8f0dcd03e470f0e150f336a9e747770>

Clearing opens on 6 July. I have attached the slides from my "final choices" assembly to remind you about what you need to consider when making your final decision. Use my updated dates rather than the ones on the slides. **Let me know if you want to discuss any of this via email or phone.**

University finance

The deadline for finance applications is **31 May**. I have attached the slides from my presentation. If you have any questions, let me know.

Back to work

Many of you will have found it hard to step down from the intensity of school life at this stage in year 13 to the total absence of school work. I have been encouraged to see some universities making contact students to suggest transition work. Also, there are some really useful online packages covering a range of employability skills that will be useful for some of you. I will forward anything I receive to you via email.

It is important that we don't underestimate the impact this situation will have had on you all, as year 13 students. If, at any point, you are struggling or just want a chat, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Even though we won't be face to face, you will always have our support. Similarly, if you are worried about anyone else, please let me know.

Take care.
Miss Khan