

# WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

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Thursday 7 May

Dear Parents and Carers

Tomorrow is a Bank Holiday and the school will be closed; no key workers or other parents/carers with children entitled to access our provision need to do so. This year's May Day Bank Holiday, moved from the first Monday of the month to Friday 8 May, marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe in 1945. In a global conflict lasting almost six-years, **451,000** UK men and women lost their lives, including around **384,000** servicemen and servicewomen and **67,000** civilian casualties. In terms of total casualties, estimates vary but it is acknowledged that between 70 million and 85 million individuals died world-wide from the conflict itself or through disease caused by it.

The Second World War was the deadliest conflict in history. Whilst our nation cannot mark this anniversary tomorrow, in the way that was planned, we must remember the enormous sacrifices made by that generation, including – dependent on our age, our parents, grandparents and great grandparents. Tomorrow, the BBC will broadcast Britain's wartime Prime Minister's VE Day speech at 2:45 pm. In terms of distant learning, I can think of no better learning that any of us can do at that time than to tune in to that broadcast. Tomorrow night, at 9 pm, the Queen will speak to the nation, exactly seventy-five years since her father, King George VI, addressed the nation at that time in 1945.

It is my intention that our school and college will come together to mark this anniversary, possibly on Remembrance Day itself on Wednesday 11 November if, by that date, we are able to operate normally. I would encourage all families to spend time tomorrow thinking about the sacrifices, reflecting on what lives those who died may have gone on to live and praying that the world never again endures such conflict.

On Sunday 10 May we are informed that Boris Johnson, our current Prime Minister, will address the nation in respect of emerging from the Lockdown we have endured for the last six-weeks. The Trust will then determine the next-steps in anticipation of some pupils and students returning to school and college. This week, Headteachers of lower and middle schools in our pyramid as well as ourselves held a virtual meeting to consider this issue and we have another virtual meeting scheduled for next Wednesday morning. As soon as we can, we will communicate with staff, pupils, students as well as our parents/carers.

Numbers in local schools during lockdown have continued to increase slowly. Numbers have increased to between 120 – 130 per day. Our numbers are averaging 12 children each day.

This week the Kimberley College Leadership Team met to discuss next steps activities for current Year 12 and Year 13 learners. **Mrs Ashby**, Head of Careers and **Mrs Stewart**, UCAS Co-ordinator, have subsequently sent information for the newsletter.

## **News from Mrs Ashby, Head of Careers: Year 13 – Preparation for next steps**

As part of their PSHE programme, Year 13 students have been supplied with a list of suggested tasks on Show My Homework [SMH] to help them prepare for their next steps.

The 'preparing for university' options include tasks such as improving study skills which are required at university level study, looking to see if their university has a reading list, preparing a budget, applying for scholarships, looking at student bank accounts, choosing accommodation, learning to cook and washing their own clothes and much more.

The 'preparing for employment/apprenticeships' options include tasks on how to look for vacancies, updating their CV, how to make a speculative application, how to network (including online networking such as LinkedIn), how to do well in competitive application processes and considering back up plans.

We would highly recommend that all Year 13 students give some time to such activities to ensure their transition in their next steps is as smooth as possible. If you or your child has any questions or concerns about their next steps, please remember that our careers team are still here to help. You can contact them at [careers@wootton.beds.sch.uk](mailto:careers@wootton.beds.sch.uk)

### **Year 12 – Work Experience**

As you are aware, Year 12 were due to complete work experience from Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020. At the time of school/college closures 59% of the year group had worked hard to secure a placement, with the remaining 31% being well on their way to doing so. Unfortunately, the current situation with Covid-19 has led to external staff who undertake necessary health and safety checks for these placements to be placed on furlough. Businesses who have pledged their support for placements are also facing very uncertain times and they are quite rightly having to put the health and safety of their own employees first by limiting all non-essential activity.

It is therefore with regret that we must cancel our work experience programme for 2019-20. I am sure that this news will be very disappointing to students who have worked hard to secure some very high-quality placements linked to their future plans. I am also aware that many parents would have been working equally hard to support them in sourcing this work experience. We are therefore considering a number of alternative options and proposals to ensure that all students who wish to gain an experience of workplace are able to do so and will outline plans as soon as possible.

In the meantime, all Year 12 students will take part in a short 40-minute virtual work experience session on Barclays Life Skills the first week back after May half term, this will be uploaded onto SMH as part of their usual next steps programme.

If you have any questions or concerns about work experience please contact Mrs Ashby, Head of Careers at [careers@wootton.beds.sch.uk](mailto:careers@wootton.beds.sch.uk)

### **News from Mrs Stewart - UCAS Co-ordinator**

During the lockdown period Mrs Stewart has sought to keep parents/carers of our Kimberley College students informed of what students in Year 12 and Year 13 considering university as their next step should be doing at the moment.

In this letter, Mrs Stewart provides a summary for parents/carers and requests that they talk to their daughters and sons about the points below:

#### **Year 12 Students:**

- ❖ If any student wishes to make an application to **Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Dentistry, or Veterinary Medicine**, and they have not already done so, please email Mrs. Stewart as soon as possible.
- ❖ All students who wish to make an early application should now be focusing on extra reading for their chosen subject at university. Links to reading lists have been sent via SMH, in addition to webinars, virtual work experience platforms, and virtual summer school opportunities.
- ❖ Mrs. Stewart will be advising early entry students about entrance exams, BMAT and UCAT tests. At present, registration has been delayed.
- ❖ **ALL students who wish to make a university application** will be starting the online application process in the week beginning 15 June. Students will be sent detailed guidance and support via SMH.
- ❖ In lieu of the planned 'Next Steps' day, support and resources will be sent to all Year 12 students via SMH.

#### **Year 13 Students**

All students who have applied through UCAS need to:

- ❖ Respond to UCAS with their FIRM and INSURANCE choices by the deadline given.
- ❖ Ensure that finance is arranged online: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance> Any delay could mean that a student's ability to start their course is affected. **Please note that your son/daughter can apply for finance even if they have not made a firm/ insurance choice yet.** Your son/daughter will be able to update this once they have decided. Student Finance needs to be given plenty of time to complete all administration.

- ❖ Ensure that university accommodation is being arranged. If your son/ daughter's firm choice has not emailed them about this, they may wish to contact them.

If your son/ daughter has a question with regards to their course, they will need to contact the university (or UCAS if it is an administration question). In order to protect personal data, once the application has been sent, institutions and UCAS will only speak to the applicant (or their nominated contact) and will not discuss the matter with Kimberley College.

If you have any questions or concerns about university applications and next steps please contact Mrs Stewart, UCAS Co-ordinator at [cstewart@wootton.beds.sch.uk](mailto:cstewart@wootton.beds.sch.uk)

### Current Vacancies

We advertise our teaching vacancies nationally in the Times Educational Supplement as well as our own website and a variety of other online platforms. We also circulate details of vacancies to local teacher training institutions and we include updates in our newsletters in the hope that you will also pass on details of the vacancies to your own contacts. Our current vacancies are:

Head of Physics	Head of Business Studies
Head of Biology	Teacher of Food Technology
Teacher of Science	Teacher of Spanish
Teacher of Mathematics	

Finally, thank you to all the volunteers who helped today in the delivery of food parcels. Thank you to the parents/carers – and others - for their words of encouragement and support. Thank you to our staff for all their ongoing hard work. Most of all thank you to our pupils and students for being so wonderful. My message to pupils and students is stay strong and keep working ... but, **don't forget tomorrow is a Bank Holiday – so please take the day off from studying!**

Yours sincerely

Michael Gleeson

**Executive Principal**

Wootton Academy Trust

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