



Weekly Student Bulletin for Braintree Sixth Form Students Friday 13 November 2020

Dear Students

I don't do this very often (it was too long ago!) but I have been thinking back to when I was a student studying for GCSEs and A Levels over the course of this week and about the ways I felt about my studies at the time. I look back on my time throughout secondary school with a great deal of affection, but I wince for myself a bit when I think of the way I would react to poor marks or disappointment in any mock exams, which was to feel that the end of the world had come. In my History GCSE mock, I confused East and West when looking at a series of cartoons (this is still something which plagues me and I am not very good at left and right either) and wrote a series of incorrect and peculiar answers on the Cold War as a result. I realised my mistake after the exam when talking to a friend and can still remember the feeling of dread which built up inside of me when I waited for the mock result. I found myself unable to focus because I was worrying about the result, despite my very kindly History teacher taking me aside to talk about ways I could perhaps try to avoid the same thing happening in the future (I am pretty sure my mum had called in) and despite knowing full well that it was a mock. Even though it was a mistake which was retrievable and avoidable in the future, I found it hard to cope with a mark that was lower than I wanted and needed to learn, as I was later able to at A Level, that it is learning from this kind of mishap which is important, and which builds to success later - and that this is something which goes on throughout our adult lives.

For students in Year 13 currently, each assessment can feel extremely stressful, as after the school closure and the cancellation of exams, the future seems to hold much uncertainty and an assessment can feel loaded with a weight of possibly counting towards calculated grades. This is not the approach we want to take. Regular assessment is important: you and your teachers need to know how much you understand and know, what you need to understand and know more of, and to check you are progressing. It is important that you use these assessments as learning opportunities, not as a final judgement. Prepare well, and take the advice that is given. Teachers are right to expect you to work regularly towards your assessments and it has never been a good idea to leave revision and preparation to the last few weeks, especially at sixth form level. Teachers' confidence that you are completing the study and work they ask of you is important, but so is following their advice and trying to act on it. We cannot know what lies ahead with exams this summer, but there is no indication currently that there will be any change in approach by the Government. We are taking a

'business as usual' approach for the summer exams and coursework and will of course let you know if there are any likely or planned changes. In the meantime, continue to study and work hard, but make sure you have a balance, and ensure the focus when you do an internal assessment is on understanding your strengths and areas for development rather than worrying about the grade for one answer, or even a whole paper. My actual History GCSE turned out fine, even though I did not take my teacher's advice to write E on my right hand before going into the exam hall.

Message from Ben Jones (Year 12 student)

I am starting a team to help try and tackle climate change and hopefully make changes within and eventually, outside of sixth form. We will hold an assembly and host meetings every couple of weeks when I have people involved, to get some ideas and put them in place. If you are interested or have any ideas whatsoever, please email me: (students and staff welcome) and I'll send you details of when and where the meetings will take place. Thank you :)

Links to support your wider reading outside the curriculum

Following the talk to Year 12 students about competitive applications and Oxbridge earlier this week, the student liaison officer has sent through the following links to support your wider reading and thinking about your subject beyond the A Level specification. These will be useful to anyone considering making an application to a high tariff university or course and may also be useful for anyone completing an EPQ.

<https://insideuni.org/>

<https://www.hertford.ox.ac.uk/study-here/outreach/challenge>

https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/sites/www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/files/publications/super-curricular_suggestions.pdf

<https://www.myheplus.com/>

Mock Interviews

Mock interviews have been going on over the past week or so for all early entry candidates and others whose interviews are coming up, and will continue into next week. Well done to all of you who have taken part in these so far. If you know a course you are applying for is likely to involve an interview, or know you will be applying for an apprenticeship, please make sure you let your tutor know so that we can arrange a mock interview. We are not very likely to be able to run a mock interview day in the same way as last year, but practising an online interview and having some feedback is extremely useful, and we will arrange interviews for anyone who needs one in the first instance.

Litter

We have had some concerns raised by staff about litter left in bins and in and around classrooms, particularly after break and lunchtime. With Covid-19, it is particularly inconsiderate to leave litter for others to clear, so can we remind you that:

- No food waste or packaging should be left in classroom bins. Make sure you are using bins in the corridors, Common Room or Café6 for this.
- No food or drink should be consumed in IT rooms or Science labs, for obvious reasons to do with equipment and safety.

Thank you!

Thank you to all of you who took part in subject videos and the school tour for the Open Evening and applications section of the website, to help prospective students. We are pleased and proud to have such great ambassadors. If you haven't had a look, it is all on the website here: <https://www.braintreesixthform.com/applications>

Year 13 Parents'/Carers' Consultation Evening: 3 December 2020

Information about the consultation evening and how to book appointments for 3 December will be sent out next week.

UCAS Applications

A reminder from Mr Bridgwater to Year 13 students intending to apply via UCAS to make sure you are being proactive and coming to see him about personal statements and finalising your applications. We encourage you to make sure you are ready to submit your applications by the end of November at the latest.

Children in Need and Odd Socks Day

Thank you for the donations to Children in Need, which mean that we have raised £153 so far as a sixth form. Any last donations welcome! On Monday 16 November, students across the school will be wearing odd socks to celebrate the start of anti-bullying week. Please join in to show your support.

Enjoy your weekends.

Yours faithfully



Mrs M Townsend
Head of Sixth Form
Assistant Headteacher – KS5