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Introduction from Bernadette Joslin, Assistant Principal (Student Services) and Amanda Down, Assistant Principal (Sixth Form)

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the regular Parent Update for Strode's and Windsor College.

We know everyone is experiencing extraordinary times, not least our students who are struggling to complete courses and plan next steps amidst uncertainty. We are really proud of the students and staff and how everyone has responded to working online. We also thank all of our parents and carers for your invaluable and continued support to motivate students to keep studying even in these tough times.

We will be shortly be undertaking a detailed survey with students about this period and gathering views about what they are enjoying, how they are feeling and what is working less well. All this with a view to addressing any concerns. We will feedback any interesting issues to parents in due course.

In this update, while we wait for clearer news about a physical return to College, we wanted to update you on a few more routine items and also remind you of support available to students and yourselves.

Finally, we wish you all well and warmly encourage you to contact us or teachers should you have any questions or queries.

Bernadette Joslin, Assistant Principal Student Services and Amanda Down, Assistant Principal Sixth Form.

Teaching and Learning - Summer Term

Level 3, Year 1 Students

Teaching and learning will continue remotely for all 1st Year Level 3 classes this term, until further notice. Students are expected to engage with all interactive learning and to complete all tasks that are set. Subject staff will make contact with students in the first timetabled lesson every week to deliver teaching content and set independent work to be completed in the second lesson; staff will then make contact with students in the third lesson of the week to check and consolidate learning.

Personal tutors will make contact in timetabled Core Studies sessions.

Please encourage students to check their college emails regularly to ensure that they are clear on how learning for each of their subjects will be delivered.

If a student is unwell during remote learning, please follow the normal procedures for informing the College. If a student is unable to participate or complete work for any other reason they should contact their individual class teachers or personal tutor.

We recognise studying remotely is a challenge for many students. Please however impress upon students that it is a college expectation that they continue to engage and work until told otherwise. Students on the first year of a two year course should note that decisions about progression into the second year will be informed by engagement and participation over this period.

Level 3, Year 2 students and Level 2 students

All 2nd Year and Level 2 courses will officially finish on Friday 15th May 2020. This has been an unprecedented end to their final term with us and we understand that many of our students will be very anxious about their next steps.

Details about accessing exam/course results will be communicated separately to students in due course.

Staff will remain contactable for students who have questions or concerns throughout this difficult time and the Careers' team will continue to be available for advice and guidance.

We wish all of those students leaving us happiness and success in the future and look forward to hearing from them.

Information for Progressing Students

1st Year progression exams that were scheduled to take place in the week beginning 27th April have been postponed and will be rearranged for later in the year. We will update students and parents as soon as we have more information on this.

Progress Reports - 1st Year Level 3 Students

Progress reports for all 1st Year Level 3 students will be published at the end of this half term and will contain an attitude to learning grade and a comment about a student's progress.

UCAS launch for university entry in 2021

After half term we will continue to talk to students about pathway options and students planning to progress into Higher Education will be starting their applications to university.

The College timelines for completing applications, along with the UCAS deadlines remain unchanged despite the COVID-19 crisis and we will continue to work remotely with students to prepare these in a timely manner.

Students will be working on their personal statements which whilst predominantly completed for UCAS Higher Education applications, are also extremely helpful when applying for jobs, apprenticeships or other courses.

All students will be expected to have completed an initial draft of their personal statement before the end of the summer term.

As well as registering for the UCAS portal, students will be encouraged to use [Unifrog](#), a complete destinations platform that supports students to explore their skills, develop their knowledge and understanding with online courses, as well as research and shortlist opportunities for the future.

We encourage parents / carers to access this service with the student's username and password and spend time reviewing the content together.

To log into the platform, please go to:
<https://www.unifrog.org/sign-in>.

For information about applying to university, to search for courses or for the latest coronavirus updates affecting UCAS applications, please visit www.ucas.com and follow the links on the homepage.

Students progressing to university in Autumn 2020

UCAS (University and Colleges Admissions Service) have recently contacted all students due to start a higher education course in 2020 with an update on Government support for students and universities. To read the letter, please click [here](#).

Despite the uncertainty, it is essential that students continue with the application process, including making decisions relating to places and applying for student finance, so that they are in the best position possible in the summer when it comes to confirmation of results and clearing.

For all the latest coronavirus updates affecting UCAS, please visit www.ucas.com.

For guidance and FAQs from the Government and Student Loans Company (SLC) about student finance and the COVID-19 outbreak, please click [here](#).

Virtual University Open Days

Whilst current restrictions mean that prospective students can not attend open days at universities, these are now being offered virtually for those who have already made applications for this coming September and those thinking of applying for entry in 2021.

Using the filter options on the link below, you can search not only for Undergraduate degrees, but also for apprenticeship open days. Click [here](#) to start your search.

These open days usually include a virtual tour of the campus, virtual lectures and the chance to talk online with current students and lecturers. To find out details of up and coming open days students can either look at the websites for universities that are of interest, use the link above or try the following alternative sites:

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

<https://www.unitasterdays.com/search.aspx>

General Support and Advice from the Careers & Employability Team

Despite the college campuses being closed, the Careers and Employability Team are still available to support students with all aspects of progressing onto their next steps, be that university, an apprenticeship,

further study or into work.

They can also offer advice with CV's, job applications and job searching. To make an appointment, please call us on 01753 793337 or email us on careers@windsor-forest.ac.uk for advice or to make an appointment.

Support for Students - Accessing Learner Services Remotely

The Student Services support teams are still available to assist students from a distance, in a number of ways. The following services are still available to help students with their continuing studies:

Financial Support and Free College Meals

All students currently in receipt of financial support are continuing to receive payments based on 100% attendance, due to the exceptional circumstances we find ourselves in. Please be aware that attendance and participation in studies is still being monitored by both curriculum and support staff.

The latest travel bursary payment to cover the month of May was paid on Thursday 7 May 2020. Students will receive a final payment, as per their original schedule's in June 2020.

Students in receipt of Free College Meals will receive regular payments equal to £15 per week to support their food related expenses. All students have received a payment schedule for this. In addition, payments have been extended to include holiday periods and half terms.

For students who have not previously applied for financial support but who find themselves in exceptional hardship during the remainder of this academic year, we are still taking new applications. To apply, please go to:
<https://windsor-forest.paymystudent.com/portal/>

For support and queries, please contact us on:
Email - Financial.support@windsor-forest.ac.uk
Telephone - 01753 793368

Online Study Skills Resources

A range of different online study skills tools, resources and information can be found for students on their [Moodle](#) pages.

Students can click the Study Skills icon on the site homepage to access resources and support topics including:

- Organising Home Learning
- Setting home learning goals and routines
- Keeping a healthy mindset during lockdown

- Useful mobile apps and online study resources
- Mindfulness techniques to use at home

Students can also access the booking system here to arrange a remote one to one appointment with the Study Skills team.

Our teams are trained to support students to develop key skills and techniques for effective study and can help with coursework and general study support including:

- Essay planning and writing
- Citations and referencing
- Workload planning
- Research skills
- Use of Ebooks

For information on how students can access eBooks from home, please click [here](#).

Library Book Returns

If students have any library books, we are asking that they keep them safe and return the books once the College re-opens. If it looks as though this is unlikely to be in the near future, we will contact students with further advice for returning loaned items.

No student will be penalised for overdue books beyond the lockdown date.

For queries in relation to library books or loans, please email learning.centre@windsor-forest.ac.uk.

Any other general support or advice:

Please contact Student Services via email to student.services@windsor-forest.ac.uk or by phone on 01784 228606.

Increased fraud risk during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic for students in receipt of Financial Support

Periods of instability, such as during the coronavirus pandemic, bring an increased risk of fraud. Fraudsters will actively exploit these difficult times and will target vulnerable areas for financial gain.

We have been informed some learners and parents have received a letter appearing to be from ESFA asking for personal learner bank details in relation to the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. The ESFA are not requesting personal account information. This is a fraudulent letter – please do not respond.

Online resources to support distance learning and develop skills

The number of online courses and resources that have developed throughout the pandemic has been extensive. We would like to draw parents, carers and student's attention to just a few that may help with bridging the gap in learning during these difficult times.

FutureLearn

Online, open courses on a range of topics including humanities, business, literature, science and study skills, as well as general interest short courses. Click [here](#) for more information.

University of Birmingham - Skills4Uni

Helping with current studies and your preparation for university. From revision techniques to note-taking, finding information to referencing styles, Skills4Uni includes six interactive zones for you to work choose from. Zones include tips from current university students, quick quizzes and opportunities to reflect on your experiences.

MOOCs via Unifrog

MOOCs (Massive Online Open Community Courses) offer students access a wider range of online course content. These courses are made free by universities and employers and provide a great opportunity for students to enhance their CVs and broaden their understanding in a range of subjects.

Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Social distancing and isolation will be hard for many people and we are very aware of how many students will be missing the support of friends, the structure of the college life and will be spending increasing amounts of time online.

During this time, supporting and maintaining mental wellbeing will be more important than ever and a growing challenge for many.

Below are some links to sites, resources and contacts to seek information and help if needed:

Stay In, Work Out

Parents / carers may be concerned about students not doing much physical activity during lock down. There is a clear link between positive mental health and staying active.

At the link below, you and students will find lots of ideas and signposting to all sorts of activities that can be done at home. There is something for everyone, even those who dislike sport but just like to do a bit of dancing.

www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout#get_active_at_home

Surrey Health

www.healthysurrey.org.uk/mentalwellbeing
For support with mental wellbeing and local support

Mind

www.mind.org.uk, call 0300 123 3393 or text 86463
For information and advice on every day living, working from home, wellbeing, drugs and much more.

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org or call 116 123. 24/7 support and advice for mental health, remote working, social media and coronavirus concerns

Kooth

www.kooth.com - A dedicated services for young people dealing with mental health problems such as depression or anxiety through online chat and community boards.

Berkshire NHS Trust - Coping guides for Children, Young People and Families

Click [here](#) for downloadable guides for support with life during lockdown

Big White Wall

Whether you're struggling to sleep, feeling low, stressed or unable to cope, Big White Wall can help you get support, take control and feel better, with 24/7 access to online community and professional support from trained counsellors. Students can access Big White Wall via the College's Moodle pages.

Safeguarding Issues

If you have a vulnerable student who you think needs additional contact or support (beyond the usual pastoral support the teacher or personal tutor continues to provide) please let us know via safeguarding@windsor-forest.ac.uk.

Key Staff Contact Information

Staff email addresses are in the following format:
Firstname.surname@windsor-forest.ac.uk.

Rowan Cookson	Principal
Amanda Down	Assistant Principal (Sixth Form)
Bernadette Joslin	Assistant Principal (Student Services)
Mandi Francsics	Director of Windsor College
Karen Griffiths	Director of Strode's College
Bina Bhardwaj	Head of Biological Sciences (Strode's)
Martin Greenwood	Head of Language, Literature & Culture (Strode's)

Parent / Carers Update



For parents and carers of all Windsor College and Strode's College students

May 2020

Sinead O'Donoghue	Head of Department – Humanities (Windsor)
Judy Brassington	Associate Director for Business, IT, Travel and Mathematical Sciences
Simon Wright	Associate Director for Art, Design, Media, Performing Arts and Sport
Zoe O'Brien	Curriculum Manager - Sport
David Brown	Head of Department - Humanities (Strode's)
Jamie Davies	Head of Department – Creative & Performing Arts (Windsor)
John Adkins	Head of Department – Maths & Science (Windsor)
Annette Jenkins	Associate Director of Tutoring
Bernie Welsh	Head of Tutoring (Windsor)
Emma Kadri-Langford	Tutor Team Leader (Windsor)
Natalie Viola	Tutor Team Leader (Strode's)
Rebecca Cain	Tutor Team Leader (Strode's)
Naomi Bailey	Head of Learner Services and Libraries
Paul McCormack	Deputy Head of Learner Services and Libraries
Pam Richardson	Director of Learning Support
Allison Hiskett	Learning Support Manager
Debbie Garcia	Transition Coordinator

Key Dates

Summer Term

20 April 2020 – 7 July 2020

Half Term 25 May 2020 – 29 May 2020

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards,
Naomi

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Naomi Bailey'.

Naomi Bailey
Head of Learner Services and Libraries

Tel: 01784 228605
Email: naomi.bailey@windsor-forest.ac.uk