

22nd May, 2020

Dear Year 13 student,

I hope this letter finds you in good health. I wanted to write partly to let you know that you are still very much in our thoughts and that we really do miss you. Today would have been your last official day in school and many of you would have sat several A Levels exams by now.

I understand that there is much uncertainty regarding starting university this year. I have received many emails from students asking about deferring. Here are my thoughts:

The current situation

University campuses have been closed this term by the Covid-19 outbreak and there is no guarantee how far they will open in the autumn. The University of Cambridge has said it will have no face-to-face lectures in the next academic year but will have students on campus, attending seminars, and the University of Manchester has said that, to begin with, its lectures (not seminars) will be taking place online only. Other universities are considering a delay to the start of the academic year. We are bound to get more information on this next month.

Things to consider

You need to weigh up what's important to you. Bear in mind the universities minister says you'll have to pay full fees even if you're learning online - but if you are offered distance learning you could potentially save on accommodation and other living expenses. Also, if your university can offer a campus experience, access to facilities like libraries and bars and cafes are likely to be limited - so student life could be very different to normal.

If you do defer then what will you do with your gap year? It may be difficult to get paid work or work experience. The traditional gap year travelling may not be allowed for some time. Will you volunteer? Do you want to live at home for another year? Lots to think about!

We know that the universities are very worried about finances. We also know that the government are allowing universities to increase the number of places this year up to 5% above their forecasts and will allocate an additional 10,000 places, with 5,000 ring-fenced for nursing, midwifery or allied health courses. It is therefore likely that most of you will get into your first choice even if your grades are below those required.

Highgate Wood School Student Council supports individual action to address the issues of Climate Change and promotes the United Nations top 10 recommendations.



5-minute showers



Drive less



Lights off



Local produce



Recycle



Meat-free meals



Zero-waste fashion



Unplug



Refill and reuse



Bring your own bag

How do I defer?

If you still want to defer, this is the guidance from UCAS:

- **Deferring after submitting your application** – in some cases, this is possible, but it will depend on the university or college and course you have applied to. You should contact the university or college directly for advice. You may be asked to give reasons for deciding to defer.
- **Deferring after you get your exam results/after your place is confirmed** – if you're due to start your course in September and decide you want to defer your place for a year, you must contact the university or college directly. Some course providers may not allow deferral for some courses at this point in the application cycle. You will be asked to give reasons for your late decision to defer. Your request will be considered, but there is no guarantee that it will be accepted, and you may be asked to reapply.
- **Be sure!** Once you have deferred your place at this point, you will not be able to revert back to your original year of entry, so you need to be sure of your decision before contacting the university or college.
- **What if you defer your place then change your mind?** If you apply for and receive an offer of a deferred place for the following year's entry, but then decide you want to start your course this year, you need to contact the university or college directly. This process is not straightforward, and will depend on whether there are places available on the course.
- **What if you want to apply through Clearing?** As a deferred applicant, you cannot apply through Clearing using your deferred application. However, if you've changed your mind and want to apply for a different course, you need to let the university or college you hold a deferred place with know that you don't want to attend anymore. You can do this by using the 'Decline my place' button in Track. You then need to complete a new application and follow the Clearing process.

What should I do about student finance?

If you are not certain about deferring, please complete the application for student finance (deadline 25th May). If you do end up deferring to 2021, you can let Student Finance know in August once you have your results.

Whatever you decide, it is a personal decision which we cannot make for you. However, if you would like to talk through any of these issues, please email your form tutor or Mr Pateman or myself and one of us can phone you.

We will keep in touch with any future developments.

Take care and a Happy Eid to those of you who celebrate this.

Ms Pinnick

Director of Sixth Form

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MAINTAINING HIGH EXPECTATIONS

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