



ILKLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A MOORLANDS LEARNING TRUST SCHOOL

Tuesday 24/3/2020

Dear year 13,

As we are no longer able to be together in school and different arrangements will be made over the coming months to ensure you receive your qualifications, we are in an unusual situation to say the least! I will be sending through a weekly powerpoint/message as usual to keep you up to date with any new developments.

For some of you, things may be quite straightforward. You may have received unconditional offers from universities and you have your pathway secured. Others may have no idea what to do next year and will likely have lots of questions. **Whatever your personal situation we still consider you to be in our care and we will do everything we can to support you.**

Please find below some responses to some of the questions raised:

1/ A huge thank you – We cannot express just how proud we were of you all last week as the school drew nearer to closure. You showed exceptional resilience and empathy to others around you particularly as lessons were increasingly disrupted by absence; We didn't hear even one complaint. You made a fluid and challenging situation very much easier to manage. We sincerely hope you have secured some happy memories from what was an unforgettable final morning on Friday.

2/ Adopting good study habits & routines - As we have had some queries from Year 13 students and parents/carers about the value of continuing with academic work please also pay particular attention to the notes below which outline our rationale for us all doing our best to maintain a healthy remote working routine (personal circumstances allowing). This is based on the information we have received so far from exam boards and our own collective professional judgement.

- I) **Completing the A Level syllabus:** Personal circumstances allowing, we are encouraging Year 13 students to continue with academic work in their subjects at least until Easter (and possibly until just afterwards), and to follow their timetabled lessons in order to complete the syllabus. This could be important in the event that students need or want to sit an exam as part of the appeals process. By continuing with your studies now during this period of isolation you may be able to reduce pressure later in the year.
- II) **Keeping in a healthy routine:** Following your lessons each day will support you to maintain a healthy routine and will help you to structure your day. Please do not feel that you *have* to complete the work, especially if you are not in a position to do so through ill health or family responsibilities. Think of it as a positive opportunity rather than something you should worry about.
- III) **Preparation for your next stage:** After Easter we are likely to ask your teachers to start providing you with study materials which will support your transition to university or other

pathways. These will be clarified but for those planning to go to university these are likely to be in the style of university-style research / 'depth of knowledge' tasks for those of you who wish to engage with that subject (e.g. if you're planning to do Biology at university, you will not want to miss the chance to consolidate your A level learning and may well also be interested in looking at work that will support transition to a university setting). This will be your chance to use this period of increased isolation to enrich your knowledge of your chosen subjects. More details about this will follow over the next few weeks. For those planning to move to other settings you may already be engaged in work-related activity (within the current government guidelines). Mrs Mitchell is available to answer any work/apprenticeship-related questions.

- IV) **The intrinsic value of learning:** Although in schools exams are obviously a major focus, we often forget that learning in and of itself is valuable as it enables us to grow as individuals and to have a deeper and more complex understanding of the world. This is the true purpose of further study and the exam result is the important external proof that this process has taken place but it is the learning process itself that is of the deepest value.

It goes without saying that if you are not in a position to work then you must not worry about it – individual circumstances will have to be taken into account by exam boards and universities and as a school we will fight your corner.

3/ Pastoral support - You may feel you need pastoral support more than ever over the coming weeks; please contact Harriet or Mr Sykes directly as they will be available every school day and will be in contact with Mr Gutch. Drop us an email and either of us can contact you either by email or phone, whichever you prefer. We are a very strong team and will do everything we can to provide you with the support you need.

4/ Looking forward – For those of you without a destination for next year, please do remember that we are still here to help you. I know that Mrs Mitchell (karen.mitchell@ilkleygs.co.uk) has already been in contact offering her ongoing support. Please do take her up on this offer. Mrs Haigh and I are also available to offer advice and answer any questions that you may have. Please just drop us an email and we will be happy to help. With regard to university offers, please keep checking your emails and your UCAS accounts. Again, please get in touch if we can help in any way. Please also look at the email sent by Mrs Haigh this morning as this will likely answer some of the questions you may have.

5/Prom and celebrations – For obvious reasons we are not going to be able to celebrate the completion of Year 13 in the usual ways in June but please rest assured that we will work with the venue and the Post-16 SLT to ensure that we do organise a fitting celebration when we can. Please just consider these celebrations postponed for the time being and know that they will be all the more enjoyable when they do take place and keep a look out for any emails.

Finally take care of yourself, stay safe and reach out to us when you need to.

Thank you

Mr Sykes and the Post-16 team