



COVID 19 Update

Firstly, and sincerely, I hope you are all well. Nothing is more important right now than your safety and that of everyone else in the world, for that matter.

The coronavirus pandemic has caused a massive disruption to everyone's daily lives, but compared to much of the world, we are set up considerably better to cope. Reading about the lockdowns in the Indian subcontinent, with many stranded, starving and homeless, really brought home to me just how fortunate we are, relatively speaking.

Well-being

That being said, this is a time of change and uncertainty for you, and that brings with it a great deal of stress for many. The infographic below contains some advice on facing change head-on (more details here, if you want: [Coping with change](#). Also, [Every Mind Matters](#) now has lots of advice and tips about how to look after your mental health while you're staying at home, and how to deal with anxiety about the coronavirus outbreak).

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|---|---|
|  <h3>Acknowledge your feelings</h3> <p>It doesn't matter what your reaction to change is – your emotions and feelings are part of what makes you, you. Listening to them is a crucial step in accepting changes in your life.</p> |  <h3>Be the instigator</h3> <p>Don't let change boss you around. It's going to happen, but it can be on your own terms. Come up with a list of positives that may come from the change to help you understand what you hope to achieve from the new circumstances.</p> |
|  <h3>See it as an opportunity</h3> <p>Change may seem like it's going to turn your life upside down, but that doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing. It can be an opportunity for you to start afresh and make positive alterations to your life.</p> |  <h3>Look forward and back</h3> <p>When big changes are taking place, they can sometimes take up all of your thinking (and worrying) power. Try to look past this time and focus on what you want life to be like after it passes. Similarly, look back at other times you've overcome changes in your life.</p> |
| <h3>Seek support</h3> <p>It's easy to bottle your emotions up in times of change. You may want to avoid dealing with upcoming situations. However, this isn't always the best strategy. Turn to friends and/or family to help you deal with change. Even if they just listen to your concerns, it can be enough to help you organise your thoughts.</p> |  |

My favourite piece of advice is seeing change as an opportunity. This period of confinement brings an opportunity to connect more with family who you are living with, and although only remotely, with friends. Moreover, you can't use the excuse that you don't now have enough time to exercise, read a book (although all libraries are now temporarily closed, that doesn't mean that you can't enjoy a good book: the [Devon Libraries Digital Library](#) lets you stream loads of free eBooks, eAudioBooks, eMagazines and much more) or pick up whatever hobby you've always been wanting to do.

Impact of Covid-19 on your examinations

As you will be aware, in light of the cancellation of examinations this summer, the College will be asked to submit a predicted grade for each of your subjects. The government (DfE and Ofqual) are currently setting out their guidelines as to how they expect schools to come to these predicted grades. The key thing for you to realise is that these grades will then be carefully

moderated nationally by the exam boards and combined with national data and prior attainment to arrive at final grades for students. This system safeguards against any schools trying to improve grades unfairly. In a few cases where subjects have ongoing coursework, you may have been asked to work on this at home (where possible) to provide additional information to support our calculated

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grades. For the majority of you, though, we are not able to take into account any additional material of assessments completed since College closure. It is anticipated that grades will be released by the end of July, but the format of this release is not yet certain.

If you have any concerns that are not answered by these words, please feel free to e-mail me.

University update

The Government has asked universities to stop making unconditional offers or amending existing offers for two weeks. This is because they're worried that you'll feel pressured to accept these offers over others that may suit you better. To give you time to make your decisions, UCAS have extended May's offer deadline for UCAS Undergraduate applicants.

| Original date | UCAS Undergraduate deadline | New date |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| 5 May 2020 | The deadline for applicants to reply if they received decisions from all their choices by 31 March 2020. | 19 May 2020 |
| 6 May 2020 | The deadline for universities and colleges to make decisions and reply to applications received by 15 January 2020. | 20 May 2020 |

These dates have been updated in Track, and you will have received an e-mail to this effect.

As Mrs Terry suggested to you:

- Check in to UCAS Track frequently to see if there are any changes to your offer status.
- If you are holding all of your offers, it may be worth holding fire on accepting given the extension of the offer deadline and current uncertainty.
- You should apply for student finance now; you do not have to wait until you have accepted your offers. Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/get-undergraduate-student-loan>.
- Ask the university that you are hoping to go to about accommodation. It may be that you can't apply for accommodation until you have accepted your offers; this could influence your decision as to when to reply to your offers.
- You can find the latest Government updates at: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates>

If you have a question about your university place, contact Mrs Terry.

Careers

Remember, you still have access to *Unifrog*, and you now have plenty of time now to be thinking about your career if you haven't done so already. Mrs Bartlett, our Careers Advisor, is also available to give careers advice over the phone. She can be contacted in the first instance at hbartlett@ivybridge.devon.sch.uk.

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Suggested home activities

I can understand that many of you will be finding it difficult to know what exactly you should be doing at home right now. *It is very possible that you should still, in fact, be studying to some extent!*

Firstly, there is very likely going to be an opportunity to take examinations early in the Autumn term if you would like to improve on the grades you will be given in July. If you want to take this opportunity, you are going to need to continue to prepare.

Secondly, if you are going on to university, what you are studying in Sixth Form is probably laying the foundation for future study. For many, the time spent preparing for Year 13 exams is when everything starts to come together, and this is a vital stage in the learning process.

Additionally, what you focus on now probably depends on what your future pathway is.

Going straight into employment – Is there any learning that you could be doing at home or online to support this? Could you be using the time now to achieve online qualifications or make a CV? Remember, *Unifrog* has a CV writing tool that can help you. If you haven't sorted a job for September, you can be searching, although I appreciate that the jobs market is very uncertain at this time.

Starting an apprenticeship – Is there any learning that you could be doing at home or online to support this? Could you be using the time now to achieve online qualifications or make a CV? Remember, *Unifrog* has a CV writing tool that can help you. If you haven't secured an apprenticeship for September, you can be searching, although I appreciate that the jobs market is very uncertain at this time.

Going to university – As well as continuing to study in your chosen field, see the tips in the *University update* section of this message. If you have firmly decided on a course, it may also be worth checking the course website to see if they have a reading list available that you could start. I will share more advice in the coming weeks, but if you want to get ahead, this website has a useful guide: <http://www.sexeyes.somerset.sch.uk/2020/03/27/preparing-for-university/> (yes, that's the name of a real school!).

Going forward

In the coming weeks, I will share more updates on examination results, university applications, careers, what you could be doing at home and, importantly, ways to support your wellbeing.

Lastly, one considerable upside to this current situation is the sense of community and togetherness that is building despite our social distancing, and I encourage you to think about when all of this is over, what act of kindness or helpfulness or compassion will you be remembered for.