

12 January 2021

Dear Year 13 Parents and Carers,

Re: Update from Senior Academy

I trust that this letter finds you and your family safe, well and in good health. Once again, we find ourselves in the situation where we are relying on remote learning and working in a very different way to that to which we are used. Let me take this opportunity to thank you for your support and help with encouraging your child to access the online learning we are providing. Fortis Senior Academy staff are working tirelessly to ensure that our provision is second to none and I hope that you and your children are finding work challenging and rewarding as they prepare for the final awarding of examination grades by teachers in the summer.

As you will have heard, teachers will be responsible for submitting students' final grades to the examination boards. The Education Secretary has announced that there will be no algorithms this year; instead, teachers will have to use a plethora of information and data available to them to ensure that your child is awarded the grades they deserve as they leave us for Higher Education and the world of work. To this end, it is vital that students attend all sessions, be they lessons, assemblies or Edge/Tutor Time, to maximise their performance.

Students now have every opportunity now to show their teachers exactly what they are capable of achieving. They should be in constant communication with their teachers, asking for advice and acting on feedback given. This will ensure that they can achieve the highest possible grades for them as individuals. The sky really is the limit for them; my question to all students in Year 13 is "*How high would you like to achieve?*". The outcome really is up to them and so I would call on you as supportive parents and carers to encourage your child to treat every day like a school day; take a mature and adult approach to their studies; reach out to their teachers and work hard.

Seneca Learning - Seneca is an online platform that teachers use to set homework or revision exercises for Post-16 learners. It can also be used to challenge learners' understanding of different topic areas, as well as allowing them to explore all topics within their qualification. It is tailored to the appropriate exam board for each subject, so the information and guidance is specific and relevant to what they are studying.

Pixl 6 - Post-16 learners can access subject specific resources, such as knowledge organisers for their subjects as well as apps, which can be used in lessons. In addition, there are a wealth of resources to help broaden their vocabulary skills and understanding of higher-level thinking. Pixl also have strategies to enable students to become empowered, helping to build their character, awareness of culture and what they have to offer the society in which they live.

Tutor 2 U (Humanities-based subjects) - Fortis Academy work in partnership with Tutor 2 U who provide subject specific resources, blogs, exam question tracking and events. Students and teachers can access up to date research, which adds context to lessons but also challenges students' application skills.

SACU- This is a tool where students can access a career quiz which matches their Level 3 subjects with potential higher education pathways and careers. It also provides guidance and checks personal statements for university and provides information on the labour market in the local area. Students access this tool within their Edge Time and as part of their induction into Sixth Form.

Future Learn - Teachers and Sixth Form leaders encourage students to complete free online courses via Future Learn, these can be used to help support university and apprenticeship applications but also to give depth and challenge to topics that they are studying in lessons. Courses are offered and accredited by a wealth of national universities and in most instances, are free.

UCAS - Students are familiar with UCAS and its associated features in the summer term of Year 12. This tool enables students to make informed decisions about and to apply for higher education.

Independent News Websites - Teachers and Sixth Form leaders embed current events into lessons but also Edge Time, so that students are aware of what is going on around them and how issues within the outside world could affect them. Students are encouraged to debate issues and use credible sources of information.

If students are struggling to access any of these online platforms, they should contact their Year 13 Pastoral Team at Sixth Form, who will be able to help them.

I must emphasise that students should not see the cancellation of exams as an easy option to achieving grades. Teachers must be able to provide evidence for the grades they award and so if students are looking for higher grades than they were achieving before lockdown, they must study hard and demonstrate to their teachers that they are capable to achieving higher grades on a consistent basis.

We will be monitoring online learning and contacting those students and their parents/carers who do not attend lessons.

Please rest assured that we are doing all we possibly can to provide your child with the best possible life chances even in these unusual times. I know that I can count on you all to ensure that your child plays their part from home.

Yours faithfully



Christopher Czepukoć
Headteacher, Senior Academy

