

3 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you and your families are well.

There is no doubt that we are all living and working in unprecedented times and I suspect that we all will be responding and coping with this challenging experience with a mixture of good and bad days as many of our natural freedoms have been removed. Many students will find this particularly challenging despite the advantages of social media.

I have to say that despite this, the vast majority of students are still engaged in learning through Google Classroom or Moodle. Teachers have been particularly pleased with the innovative and creative ways in which students have uploaded practical sessions from science projects to choreography as evidence of meeting certain learning criteria.

It is also vitally important that students do manage their time effectively. Students have been invited to join a Google Classroom on Health & Wellbeing (**code ur7equx**) which hosts a wide range of information and tips on maintaining health and wellbeing for the mind and the body through these difficult times.

Please encourage your son or daughter to have a look at this. Staff are still available to support students over the Easter break should there be any safeguarding concerns and can be contacted at safeguarding@hsrc.ac.uk (Havant and South Downs Campuses) and safeguarding@alton.hsrc.ac.uk. For other queries please use the customerservices@hsrc.ac.uk address.

Online safety: There is information in the Google Classroom from the www.thinkuknow.co.uk website on how to keep safe online. Many of us will be using technology more at this time and being introduced to new forms of technology so we need to be vigilant to phishing scams, and always alert to emails containing links – particularly when these ask for a username and password. There are lots of useful websites on keeping safe online directed at parents including www.internetmatters.org, www.parentinfo.org, and www.thinkuknow.co.uk.



Mike Gaston, Principal & CEO

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Ofqual has just released its [guidance](#) on calculated grades for summer GCSE, AS and A level exams. In summary, for every GCSE, AS and A level subject, exam boards will require each school and college to submit the following information:

- A centre assessment grade for each student
- The rank order of students within each grade.

So that the final grades awarded are as fair as possible, exam boards will use a statistical model to standardise grades across centres in each subject, considering:

- expected grade distributions at national level,
- results in previous years at individual centre level, and
- the prior attainment profile of students at centre level.

Rest assured that the College will be doing everything to ensure that any centre assessment grades given in lieu of examinations are up-to-date and accurate.

It must be stressed that every college has been instructed that on no account should information be shared with students and/or parents regarding centre assessment grades and/or ranking.

We await more information regarding vocational provision which we will share at the earliest opportunity.

For any update and detail on both GCSE, A-level and Vocational provision please see our [website](#).

We fully acknowledge and sympathise with many students who feel cheated by the difficult decision to cancel A-level and vocational exams and end of year final major projects from engineering to art and design exhibitions. Many students are feeling some loss at this abrupt end to their time at college.

We are also looking at ideas of celebrating with students later in the year and ensuring we have a more fitting end to their time with us here across all three campuses at HSDC.

Finally, we all know how difficult it can be at times for any of us.

A number of organisations and charities will play an important part in helping people cope through this period of change and uncertainty. Whether we have an existing mental health condition or not, we may all need a little extra help to deal with the consequences of this unprecedented set of circumstances.

HSDC works in partnership with Mind who have created resources which focus on keeping well while self-isolating or remote working. You can view their full length upload on wellbeing at home at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qubt5-X2hMU>



This focuses on Mind's 5 Ways to Wellbeing:

- Be Active - cleaning, dancing or seated exercise
- Connect with Others - via technology, check in with neighbours, colleagues, family and friends
- Give time, support or share your knowledge with others - help people who are struggling with technology to connect with others or look to support a charity
- Keep Learning - try to create a new routine and include some learning through an online course or YouTube skill sharing
- Take Notice - Relax by reading, writing, yoga, mindfulness or music. Make sure that you are getting sunlight and fresh air and limit your exposure to news updates by setting time limits on your viewing.

Finally, may I share these thoughts with you that were written by a teacher of geography to her students.

“Please remember - it’s not just about the exams, it never was. It was a journey. You got to know our world and its people and importantly, its wonder. You are part of that.

Do continue learning. Continue because it is all still worth knowing (and always was), because one day soon that world and all its wonders will still be waiting for you. Learning lasts forever. All your work, all your skills, all your knowledge, are yours - to keep. Exams are a day and a grade. LEARNING was what mattered and is what matters.

I so enjoyed teaching you. Good luck! I look forward to hearing about your successes.”

I think it is a message for us all.

I wish you and your families best wishes over this Easter period.

Yours sincerely



Mike Gaston
Principal & Chief Executive

