

Contact: Mrs Smith

Ref: NSM/SN

23<sup>rd</sup> August 2017

Dear Student / Parent

### **Re: Year 13 Post 18 Options Support**

As you will be aware, university is not the only Post 18 option that is available to your son/daughter upon completion of their Sixth Form studies. The academy has access to a wide range of materials and knowledge regarding apprenticeships, pathways into employment, gap years and opportunities overseas. At this point if your son/daughter is still uncertain of their plans after Year 13, I would advise that they book a meeting with **Miss Scott**, the academy's Independent Careers Advisor to discuss their options. Equally, the Sixth Form team will continue to offer support and guidance to students.

### **Year 13 UCAS Applications**

Your son/daughter may be in the process of making a UCAS application and they should hopefully receive offers from Universities before the end of this calendar year. I thought it would be pertinent at this stage to provide you with some additional information to help you to understand and contextualise the next steps for your son/daughter.

### **Student Finance**

Parent/guardians, understandably, worry about the cost of university. Fortunately, there is no requirement for students to pay tuition fees up-front or while studying.

### **Tuition Fees**

Universities can charge up to £9,250 per year in tuition fees, as long as they meet strict criteria to ensure all students can access their courses. Please check individual university websites to find out information about current fees. Responsibility for paying tuition fees rests with the student, not with parents/guardians.

### **Tuition Fee Loans**

Students will be able to pay their tuition fees after graduation by taking out a Tuition Fee Loan from Student Finance England, who pay the fees directly to the university. These loans are available to all students, irrespective of household income.

### **Maintenance Loan**

This loan is available to eligible full-time students and is often the main source of income for student living expenses. Students apply for this through Student Finance England. Eligible students are entitled to at least 65 per cent of the maximum loan amount available; the other 35 per cent depends on household income.

### **Repaying the Loans**

Tuition Fee Loans and Maintenance Loans are combined and repayments will start the April following son/daughters graduation, but only if they are earning £21,000 or more per year. Repayments are taken out through the tax system so the whole process is very simple: there is no need to set up direct debits.

As well as the support above, additional income sources include:

### **Student bank accounts**

These usually include an interest-free overdraft facility. Encourage your son/daughter to do some research and choose the best overall deal for them.

### **Earnings from part-time and vacation work**

Many students work part-time and during the holidays, however, it is important that they check with their academic department regarding the maximum number of hours per week they should work.

### **Sponsorships**

Some employers will fund particular university degrees or higher education courses, so it is well worth your son/daughter taking some time to research and apply for appropriate sponsorship opportunities.

### **Accepting offers**

By April/May 2018, UCAS will confirm your son/daughter's university offers, students must then choose two offers: a first choice ('firm acceptance' or CF) and a second choice ('insurance acceptance' or CI). At this point students will need your guidance, as they are in effect committing themselves to these two institutions as long as they achieve the grades/points required. It is important that students reply by the deadline given by UCAS, if they do not they will lose ALL their offers. Given the level of competition for popular degrees and universities it is also vital that students accept offers for which they are likely to achieve the required grades, and that their insurance choice requires lower grades than their first choice. According to UCAS, typically around 40 percent of insurance acceptances are higher or the same as the applicant's first choice.

### **UCAS Extra**

Some students may find themselves in a position where they have received no offers: this can be for a variety of reasons. Students in this situation can apply to one or more additional courses through UCAS Extra, which is similar to an early version of Clearing; the UCAS website will indicate which courses have vacancies and gives full details of how to apply. Applications are open from March until the end of June.

### **Confirmation, Clearing and Adjustment**

On results day if your son/daughter has achieved the entry requirement for their first choice, they will go there; if not and if they have secured the entry requirement for their second choice the expectation is that the student will take up their insurance offer.

The Adjustment period allows students who do better than they expected in their examinations to contact universities with higher entry requirements to see if they still have vacancies, whilst holding their original offers. However, universities do not necessarily have places available during the Adjustment period. Further information about Adjustment can be found at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). If students have not met the entry requirements for any of their offers they will enter Clearing. The

situation can vary according to the relative popularity of the subject applied for: in undersubscribed subjects at less popular universities admissions tutors might be more prepared to accept students who have missed their offers. Or, the student might be offered a different course at the same university. If your son/daughter has missed the entry requirements of their chosen course by a grade/a few points we will support them to contact their first choice university to check whether they have definitely been rejected or not; it is possible they could still secure their place.

If students have been rejected by both their first and insurance choices, it is important they start to look for other courses, through the Clearing process. Clearing can be a very fast process, with the most popular courses filling up on the first day. We will support your son/daughter in checking the official course lists which will appear on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and usually in The Telegraph newspaper, and to contact universities.

**It is highly advisable that students are present on results day in case there are any issues with accessing their firm or insurance offers.**

I hope that this information is of use to you as parents/guardians, should you have any further questions then please do not hesitate to contact me at the Academy (01536 396366 or [nsmith@brookeweston.org](mailto:nsmith@brookeweston.org)).

Yours sincerely

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Director of Sixth Form