

A WARM WELCOME BACK TO OUR STUDENTS!

It was with a great sense of enthusiasm and delight that we began to welcome our students back from lockdown on 8 March. I want to take this opportunity to commend all students and staff for dealing with the disruption with good humour and patience and for ensuring that high quality learning and teaching has been maintained as far as has been practically possible. Attendance and engagement with lessons was high, but I, like the rest of my staff, am pleased to have students back in college for face to face learning. I am incredibly mindful of the need to give everybody space to reacquaint themselves with the rhythms and rituals of college life once again, and supporting students, particularly those completing their studies this summer, in managing anxieties around the awarding of grades later this year. I want to assure you that teachers will be focussing on what students know rather than the deficit model of what they don't!



AWARDING OF GRADES SUMMER 2021

I know our Yr13s and those due to sit GCSE exams will be particularly keen to find out what the government's expectations are regarding the awarding of grades for A level, GCSE, BTEC, CTEC and UAL, this summer. Well, we are a little clearer, although we are still awaiting some important information from the examination boards which is due out shortly. What we do know, is that grades for most qualifications will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards, standardised by the college and quality assured by the exam boards. The national process defined by the Department for Education and the exams' regulator, Ofqual is as follows:

1. Teachers will assess students against a national standard, which will be defined by the exam boards before the Easter break.
2. Departments will submit grades which will be quality assured by the College. This internal quality assurance process will have to be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards.
3. Our College results will be quality assured externally by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of the College's evidence.
4. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, then the exam boards will award students their final grades.
5. If students believe that the College has not followed its own procedures then they will have the right to appeal.

We are still awaiting to hear the specifics from the exam boards but for now, the College has put together its initial plan which is available to view on the College website.

In the meantime, teachers will be discussing with their classes the assessments that will be used as evidence to support the grades awarded. To further support this, an assessment period will run from 19th April until 14th May, which will allow some more assessments to take place that can contribute towards the final grade awarded. It is incredibly important that students work as hard as they can during the remaining weeks, to give themselves the best opportunity to secure the best grades possible this summer.

Please be aware that results days for both A level and GCSE are earlier than normal, on 10th and 12th August

ASYMPTOMATIC TESTING

I would like to thank everybody who has participated in the asymptomatic testing. By the end of the first week of testing, we had processed over 800 tests which is quite simply, a terrific achievement. By carrying out these tests we are ensuring the College remains as safe as it can possibly be. Students will be issued with home testing kits only after they have undertaken three onsite tests.

RECOVERY EDUCATION

The College has designed a recovery education programme to support students in catching up with lost learning, as a consequence of the lockdown. Our Achievement Officers have been providing small group sessions for students which gives them time and space to get back on track. Some courses are also offering additional sessions over the Easter holidays to help prepare students for the upcoming assessments.

UCAS UPDATE

To date, 383 UCAS applications have been submitted and offers have started to flood in with 95% of students having already received at least one offer. We have more students than ever applying to Russell Group and ST30 universities which is brilliant. Congratulations to Isabella Linton who has received an offer from Wadham College, Oxford to read Classics. Given the early release of A level results, UCAS Track will go live from 10 August 2021

VISITING SPEAKERS

Students studying A level politics and sociology have benefited from a host of visiting speakers "Zooming-in" to their lessons during lockdown. First they received a visit from alumna and MP for Vauxhall, Florence Eshalomi, which was followed up by a meeting with Maurice Mcleod, the CEO of think tank "Race on the Agenda". Most recently, students from across the humanities and social science departments participated in a conference on Black Lives Matter organised by Goldsmiths University.

In January, the College marked World Holocaust Day by listening to the experiences of one survivor, Eve Kugler BEM. The theme for the day was "be the light in the darkness" which was subsequently followed up in RP lessons

THE CHAPLAINCY

The Chaplaincy here at SFX is at the heart of our college. The Spirit of the Gospel is at the centre of our way of life, relationships and community. We want to accompany each student on their journey through college, offering support and opportunities to develop spiritually, morally and intellectually. We are proud of our Catholic tradition whilst also welcoming students and staff of all faiths and none. If you are keen to get involved with the Chaplaincy, then please email our College Chaplain, Kate: K.West@sfx.ac.uk

STUDENT WELFARE—MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

We recognise that students may be facing additional mental health challenges due to the disruption and uncertainty caused by Covid-19. We offer a number of wellbeing activities which are open to all students. Should a young person of the College be struggling with their mental health, please remember that they can access support from our Student Welfare Officer and/or College Counsellor. Alternatively, they can also access support via [the NHS](#) and online resources from [Public Health England](#), along with support from mental health charity [Mind](#).

KEY DATES

TERM	FIRST DAY	HALF TERM	LAST DAY
SUMMER 2021	MONDAY 12 APRIL	MONDAY 3 MAY (MAY DAY BANK HOLIDAY) MONDAY 31 MAY—FRIDAY 4 JUNE	TUESDAY 6 JULY

TEACHER ASSESSED GRADES —ASSESSMENT PERIOD

19 April to 14 May 2021

KEY ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS POINTS (KAPP)

KAPP 4 w/c 14 JUNE 2021

END OF YR12 EXAMS

7-11 June 2021

A LEVEL RESULTS DAY TUESDAY 10 AUGUST 2021
GCSE RESULTS DAY THURSDAY 14 AUGUST 2021

SFX ALUMNI

You will have read elsewhere in this newsletter of a talk made by one of our alumna, Florence Eshamoli, MP for Vauxhall. Each year students leave SFX to start their journey towards a great future, each through their own unique path. Help us grow the network, so that together we can help inspire and support current students. Sign up on the College website [here](#) or by emailing Natalie Green via alumni@sfx.ac.uk

DIGITAL INNOVATION

As you are aware, the College has been on somewhat of a digital journey over the past 18 months or so. I strongly believe that this helped tremendously with our smooth transition to on-line learning during lockdown. A significant aspect of the digital strategy has been our partnership with Apple and the roll-out of I pads across a number of courses. We intend to extend the strategy to include all courses from next year. If you are interested in finding out more about the strategy or how to acquire an Ipad then please contact

WORLD PAY

Our new online payment system is now up and running and enables students and parents to pay for resources such as books, IT fees and trips and visits by debit/ credit card via the student's Prospect account. This is a convenient and cashless way to make payments to the College.

PARENT GOVERNOR

There is a vacancy on our governing body for a Parent Governor for which we are seeking a volunteer to be elected to serve for 2 years. If you are interested, email the Clerk to the Governors, Mrs Eleanor Lewis, e.lewis@sfx.ac.uk

PARENT PORTAL

Parents/Carers should, by now, have received their log-in details to the 'Parent Portal'. From the Parent Portal you are able to view your son/daughter's timetable, KAPP progress reports and levels of attendance. If you are having difficulty in accessing the Parent Portal or need to change contact details, please email admin@sfx.ac.uk

EASTER REFLECTION

This week marks the one-year anniversary of the first "lockdown". With the lockdown have come tough restrictions, isolation and suffering. Whilst I am sure that we have all suffered to some degree, it is important to remember those who have suffered more than ourselves and we pray that their suffering will ease.

Jesus suffered and died to save human kind and we celebrate His resurrection at Easter. Let us pray that we too can emerge from this struggle with the strength and fortitude that Jesus showed us.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the whole SFX community, to wish you and your families a happy and peaceful Easter.