

April 2021 - edition 12

LOCKDOWN EDITION

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OPPORTUNITY
INSPIRATION
SUCCESS



The newsletter for Wexham School

Whole school community “impressive” during lockdown

Between 1st January and 7th March 2021 the school, like all others across the nation, was closed as the country went into the third national lockdown.

Keyworker and vulnerable students and those with an Education Health Care Plan were allowed to be in school but all others had to remain at home. Throughout this extremely troubling time I have been exceptionally impressed with the whole school community.

The dedication of all staff to keep the school operating for the students in school and providing learning at home was tremendous.

Our thanks to all our parents and carers who kept their children safe and learning at home. The school reopened on 8th March 2021 when we commenced testing all students before they returned to school.

Everyone was extremely relieved to be back in school once again and we all hope that closure does not have to be repeated for a third time! During the lockdown the school's work included:

- Remaining open for those allowed to be physically on site
- Setting a blended approach to remote learning, including live teaching, physical work

packs sent home and setting tasks via 'show my homework' and using the Oak National Academy and the BBC. This allowed staff to continuously assess students. Also tutorials and assemblies were held remotely.

- Students in Year 12 physically sat (socially distanced) their BTEC exams, with excellent results.
- The School provided Free School Meal vouchers for the first two weeks whilst the DFE scheme was being relaunched.
- The school purchased over 50 laptops for students at home to fill the gap caused by the delay and lack of laptops from the DFE. This was also supplemented by donations from the local community through the work of our Governor Ruth Rooley, which we were extremely grateful for.
- Regular phone calls home were made by the pastoral team.
- Home visits took place to check on the welfare of some of our students.

- Continuing to offer the services of our School Counsellor and Learning Mentors to those students that required additional help and support.

Now we are getting back to the new normal and looking forward to the Summer Term. -

Lawrence Smith – Headteacher

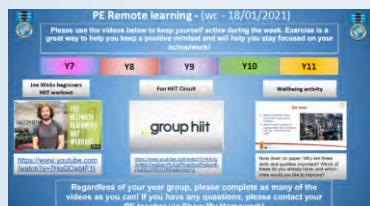


Staying active during lockdown

During the latest lockdown the PE Department were keen to keep all students active by setting a range of weekly activities and challenges for each year group to complete.

We created a slide which had three separate activities on it, one virtual HIIT class, one skills challenge video, and one well-being activity. This then went to pupils in all year groups via SMHW.

We encouraged everyone to complete all three



activities each week, as many times as they could, and highlighted the benefits this would have on their physical and mental health.

The videos were a great success and the pupils loved telling us and submitting



photos to say they had completed them.

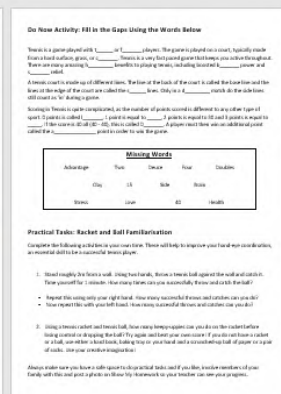
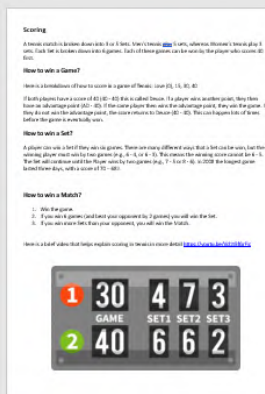
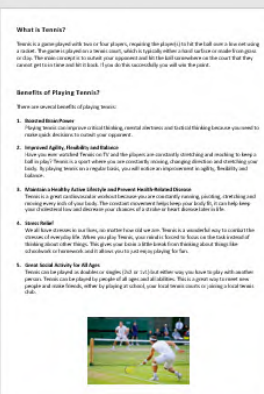
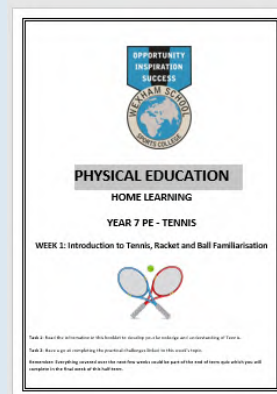
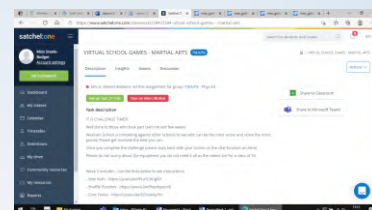
In addition to this, KS3 were also given a Theory pack each week where they could learn about different sports including tennis, basketball, lacrosse and orienteering.

These packs were filled with information about the sport so the pupils could continue learning at home.

There were 'fill in the gap' activities to summarise each pack and even some practical challenges for the pupils to practice and

develop the relevant skills.

KS3 also took part in the Virtual School Games. This is a competition against other schools in the area and allowed pupils to log any exercise they were doing in order to gain points and compete against other schools.



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Hi guys, my name is Ms. Khan and I started at Wexham in January, during lockdown.

I teach English and Media Studies and am the Pupil Premium Coordinator. It feels odd being at school with no students. It certainly is quieter!

I suppose my journey is quite similar to many of yours. I too was a student at Wexham, many years ago and was in the year group first to study at Wexham Sixth Form.

The Wexham spirit is much the same as when I was here. The buildings have changed, but many teachers are still here and the ethos remains as lovely as it was when I was a student.

After I left Wexham, I went on to study Journalism at The University of the Arts, London. I loved uni. It was fun and I made lifelong friends.

I don't know when I decided I wanted to become a teacher. But somewhere in my second year, I began thinking about teaching and did a short placement at a school in Acton in the Summer term.

I liked it. It was then that I decided that I would go on to do a PGCE in Secondary Education (English).

After I graduated, I applied for my PGCE and got on to the course, but then decided to defer it for a year and take a year to do other things. Mostly read. I read lots that year out and I really enjoyed it!

The following year I went back to university to train to become

a teacher. Just before I finished my training, I met an old teacher, who said they may be looking for a teacher at Wexham...

Teaching at Wexham was a dream for me. It was the school I'd studied at and a school close to my heart, so when the opportunity to teach here came knocking on my door, I took it with both hands.

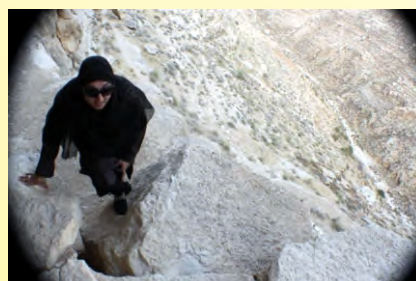
I completed my NQT year here and stayed for three years, before I left to pursue another dream, to work in the charity sector.

I worked at an international charity called Encompass for three years, which I loved. but as they say, all good things must come to an end and my time at Encompass ended with a redundancy as the charity downsized.

I then decided to come back into education and worked at a couple of schools, before the opportunity to work at Wexham came knocking again and much like I did the first time, I took it with both hands!

Outside school, I love reading, photography, swimming, hiking and the great outdoors. I play friendly basketball regularly. I took up couch to 5k before gyms closed, but had to stop, sadly.

I hope to complete couch to 5k as soon as I can get on a treadmill again and by my birthday in August, be running at least 5k weekly! I love being back at Wexham and am so excited to meet you all! I am the new inhabitant of Woodside 1!



Lockdown Legends

There has been a lot of talk in the press during lockdown about schools are “closed”. At Wexham, we have never been closed – in fact far from it!

We have been open throughout all national lockdowns to support our students – whether that be face to face teaching for our keyworker and vulnerable

students or conducting live lessons.

(See Ms. Corrie’s fab article explaining our school’s development through lockdown in relation to teaching and remote learning on page 4).

Here are some of our students’ reactions to being in school during lockdown...

Huw – Year 7

“ I have been in school for lockdown learning since January. The best bit about being in school is that I have been more motivated to get my school work finished.

When I am at home I am not in the right mind-set to get my work done (and there are lots of distractions)

I am really looking forward to getting back to ‘normality’ and being able to get on with my learning with my teachers in a real classroom. ”



Madison – Year 9

“ I have only joined the lockdown group fairly recently. Lockdown has been much better for me since I started coming back in to school. I have got to see real people. I also find it so much easier to concentrate when I am in school in the classroom.

I cannot wait to have a real lesson with my teachers and friends. ”

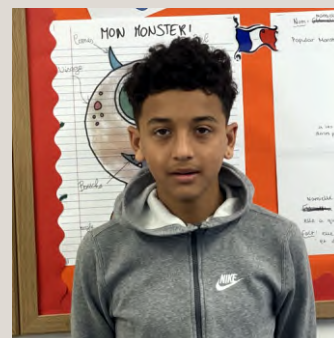


“ I have been in school during all of the lockdowns. The most recent lockdown has been so much better for me because I have been in real lessons.

The best part about being in school during lockdown is that I have been able to interact with my teachers and they have been able to help me.

I am looking forward to getting back into “normal” school. I can’t wait to see all of my friends again. ”

Tyreece – Year 9



Looking after our Staff

Staff well-being has been vitally important during lockdown and since certain initiatives have been put in place there has been some brilliant engagement.

One of the main focuses was to get staff talking, a teams groups was established where staff can come to have a general chit chat, share ideas or anything positive they have been up to. Currently there are 16 members of

staff involved, it has been quiet to start but hopefully this will get up and running.

A new well-being

newsletter has been established with currently two issues available to staff.

Within the newsletter, Wellbeing resources have been shared as well as cooking

recipes, books, tv shows, films, staff shout outs and walks all recommended by staff. It has been really nice to see what people are getting up to and those I have spoken to have really liked having the newsletter to look at.

Fitness Friday has also been a hit with 7 staff regularly attending, again I am hoping for this to expand but it has been nice seeing others on a Friday to work out, also praise cards have been issued to staff who have engaged.



Keep calm – and carry on teaching!

In common with schools all across the country, lockdown brought a great deal of challenge to the teachers and students of Wexham School.

We went on a very steep learning curve to ensure that everyone was able to continue their education away from the physical classroom.

In the first lockdown we posted work out to our students and our teachers worked very hard to make sure that what was sent was interesting and appropriate for the many different students that we teach.

We also made use of our homework platform 'Show My Homework' to post tasks and resources for students to access from home. Many of our students worked hard to complete an excellent standard of work.

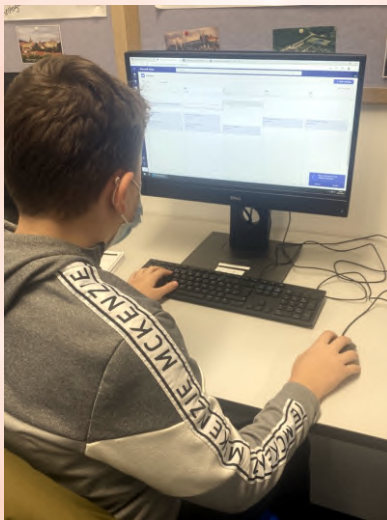
When the next school lockdown was announced after Christmas at the start of 2021, we knew that it was time to deliver live lessons to our students so that their learning could continue at home.

Teachers worked hard to master Microsoft Teams, ably led and supported by Ms O'Neill and Ms Edwards.

We were really pleased at how quickly we were able to offer high quality online lessons to all year groups.

Some teachers worked in school and many more were teaching from home which was a totally new experience for them. Those of us lucky enough to sit in on lessons across the curriculum were surprised and pleased at how well students responded to their teachers. Some fantastic work was produced and learning continued despite not being in school.

We are delighted to have welcomed our school community back to Wexham in March because we know there is no substitute for being together in the classroom but we can now look back with pride on what we achieved as a school during these difficult and unprecedented times.



Learning Mentors – Business as usual

During lockdown the Learning Mentors have been in school every Tuesday.

The rest of the time we have been working remotely. When we get together we call young people across all year groups to support them emotionally during lockdown.

We know how hard this lockdown has been for many of our students and our phone calls are well received.

While we briefly discuss school work and the accessing of live lessons, our main aim is to allow them to talk about things that may be happening in their lives that is impacting their mental health or their ability to stay focused and complete school tasks.

These could be issues around ill health, boredom and loneliness for example. Much like when in school, we listen, offer ideas, set fun challenges and offer support as needed.



Referrals from staff are made via our school SENCO with regards to young people that may be experiencing challenges in their lives.

For example, this could be due to anxiety, bereavement or incidents that have occurred in school.

The support we offer within school is very much tailored to the needs of the student and could be

1:1 or group mentoring, conflict resolution, or reflection days.

We are always mindful that whilst students navigate these bumps in the road, as well as looking after their well-being, learning needs to continue.

We therefore help with lesson work and activities that challenge the mind.

We also meet with teachers and students together, to help the student realise the school expectations and work out ways of moving forward.



Those who Teach – Teach!

PGCE student Miss Porter tells us about her experiences during lockdown as she changes teaching style and stays at Wexham a lot longer than planned.

At such a young age, we are to decide what career path to take, and the passion I have for my chosen career path continues to grow daily at Wexham School.

I have always been taken back by the way writers are able to create a story, portray a character and manipulate the way a reader feels. I want young individuals to feel the passion and pleasure in deciphering the meaning of a novel, a poem, or a text, for it not to be a chore, but an unconscious action, skill and an exhilarating experience.

Wexham School has provided me with the facilities, the inspiration, and the skills to be able to do just this.

When I started my PGCE in September of 2020 at Brunel University, I had no idea that the UK would once again be succumb to another lockdown in three short months.

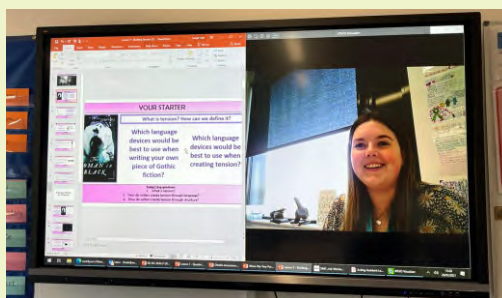
In such unprecedented times, I was uncertain what the year would hold for me, and whether or not I would be able to move from PGCE to NQT.

The positive welcome I received on my first day at Wexham was overwhelming, and the support I have had since has been remarkable.

I was met with kindness, support, and compassion from all over the school and because of this I found my feet very

quickly.

The English department is incredibly supportive and hardworking, creating an environment which is a pleasure to work within and encourages teachers to continue creating inspiring lessons and motivate pupils to have a love for the subject.



I was provided with so many opportunities from planning schemes of work to holding literacy intervention lessons for children attending school over the lockdown and all of these things have allowed me to flourish as a teacher of English.

So much so that I requested to stay beyond my initial 5 month placement, and will now complete my entire PGCE here.

Everything moved so fast in the lead up to Christmas. One minute I was teaching 30 children in a classroom, and the next I was delivering live lessons on Teams to an entire year group.

It was a big jump, for myself, and the school. But they did not yield. Quickly and efficiently adapting to changes, and still producing high quality support, and exceptional teaching and learning opportunities for all students and staff.

It was an honour to be a part of and I am exceptionally thrilled to say that I will continue my career as a qualified teacher of English at Wexham in July!

Exam Success In spite of National Lockdown

It is early January and Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has cancelled exams and GCSEs as the coronavirus pandemic rages through the UK, shutting schools and plunging the nation into another full lockdown

However, the Wexham 6th Form students showed Gavin and the rest of the world what they are made of during the most recent national lockdown achieving

such incredible results in the face of adversity.



Miss Song (Course Leader for Travel and Tourism and Assistant Leader of Sixth Form) said: "Students in Level 2 Travel and Tourism have excelled in their external exams despite the disruptions brought on by Covid. Everyone achieved a Merit in at least one of their exams and some achieved Distinction, a testament to their resilience and hard work".

Lockdown Lunches and Catering at Wexham

During all lockdowns, Wexham provided our keyworker students with a wholesome lunch when they were on site.

Before the DFE made any announcements to provide lunches for those who are *Free School Meal* – Wexham School were providing our own vouchers for our FSM students. We continued with this throughout the school holidays to support our parents and families further.

This was at a time when the DFE were being put under pressure by the incredible campaign that Marcus Rashford was



leading – we were in full support of this cause and did everything that we could to support our students.

Here at Wexham we are very lucky to be working in partnership with Innovate who are our external contractors for all of our food and beverage needs.

Head Chef Erin has been our main point of contact throughout all lockdowns as the rest of her team were furloughed. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that all of the staff and students have been fully nourished during these difficult times.

School Governor to the rescue!

Lockdown has been a particularly challenging time for students and Parents/Carers. With the significant move towards full, remote learning, many have faced difficulties in supporting students due to limited access to computers and broadband in the home.

While the Department for Education (DfE) did provide some laptops, the amount that Wexham School received was very short of the number required to ensure all our students had good access to a laptop and enabling them to access the full range of remote learning provided.

As a result the school itself purchased a significant number of laptops to supplement those provided by the DfE. In addition we are hugely grateful to the support of one of our Governors, Ruth Rooley, who has worked tirelessly within the local community to source and supply unused laptops from members of the public.

These have been generously donated to the

School and we have had these professionally 'cleaned' and reconditioned to send out to students as part of our laptop provision.

The support from Ruth and the local community

was invaluable in ensuring that all our students were provided with a suitable device to undertake remote learning, helping them to focus on their learning and make continued good progress, despite having to work from home.

Of course, I would also like to thank the staff who have worked

tirelessly to adapt their teaching approaches and resources to meet the significant challenge of teaching students online and remotely rather than in the classroom.

I am incredibly proud of the staff at Wexham and of the students who have achieved so much in such difficult circumstances, supported so well by our Parents and Carers. Thank you all! **-Mr Phalorar**



Staff Wellbeing Charity Challenge

To raise money for Comic relief 22

IT'S RED NOSE DAY

nice to hear so many staff members asking how

members of staff signed up to be involved in a step challenge.

The aim of the challenge was to see which team could walk the most steps over a two week period as well as raising money for Comic Relief.

It has been really nice to see staff coming together for a good cause and to also focus on their own wellbeing and being active.

Every single individual involved really gave it their all and the challenge has really encouraged different members of staff to support one another, some have even changed their habits of using the lift and are now walking up the stairs.

Walking down the corridors it was

many steps they had done and battling against each other.

There were two teams consisting of: Team 1: Sanaa Harb, Kelly Reeves-Williams, Harriet Freeman, Sumen Bains, Huma Aktar, Cindy Song, Ritchie Nicholson, Isabelle Fatoux, Linda Beatty, Nadya Sloan, Judy Jennings, and, Team 2: Jamie Mackintosh, Natalie Steele-Bodger, Tracey Cunningham, Julie Tidey, Jade McGowen, Misan

Wellspring, Sarvinder Phalora, Ben Clark, Megan Pike, Rakhi Gajree, Lisa Griffin

The winning team was announced on Wednesday 24th with Team 1 accumulating **1,660,217** steps and Team 2 accumulating **1,653,795**. This is a combined total of **3,314,012** which is excellent!

As this was a charity event over £150 was also raised for Comic Relief!

Well done everyone!!



Pastoral preservation during difficult times

Year 7

The Year 7 Pastoral team were incredibly proud of how resilient the Year 7 pupils were during lockdown.

Regular phone calls were made to discuss the well-being of our pupils, and our weekly pastoral session on Microsoft Teams focused on mindfulness.

There were weekly spelling tests for pupils to complete, as well as challenges being set during the Teams session. Pupils who worked hard were nominated by their teachers, and received certificates through the post.

Year 8

During the lockdown period, the year 8 tutors kept in contact with their tutees on a weekly basis.

Each week the tutors held a live tutor period using Microsoft Teams. The pupils really enjoyed this and participation levels were excellent.

From a pastoral perspective, the pupils really enjoyed being able to connect with their friends and their tutor.

It was a great way for the tutors to make sure their tutees were all well and maintain that tutor group relationship.

In addition, the tutors were able to continue teaching current affairs on a weekly basis during the live tutor time. This was an excellent section of the tutor schedule and helped to develop the pupils understanding of the important issues that were evident during the lockdown period.

The weekly tutor time schedule also included two PSHE lessons that focussed on emotional, social, mental and physical wellbeing. The wellbeing of the pupils was a major focus for the year team during the lockdown period.

Numerous resources were created by the team and this gave all the pupils an opportunity to participate in

and enjoy various wellbeing activities in addition to their academic studies.

These activities included the Wexham wellbeing wonder wall, the lockdown reflection diary, the self-care plan in the general wellbeing pack and the how to learn at home knowledge organiser.

Overall, year 8 had a very positive lockdown period and as a year group they demonstrated the ability to adapt to different circumstances, balance family life and school commitments.

For those pupils who demonstrated outstanding effort, they were recognised in the live tutor group assemblies in the PowerPoint presentations. Certificates were also sent home to make sure that the pupils

received the recognition from their parents and carers for their amazing resilience and dedication.

Year 9

The Year 9 Pastoral team missed not seeing all of our year group in school over the past few months, but luckily we were all still able to keep in contact.

Regular phone-calls home, live registration sessions on Microsoft Teams and the return of assembly helped make remote learning feel a bit more 'normal'.

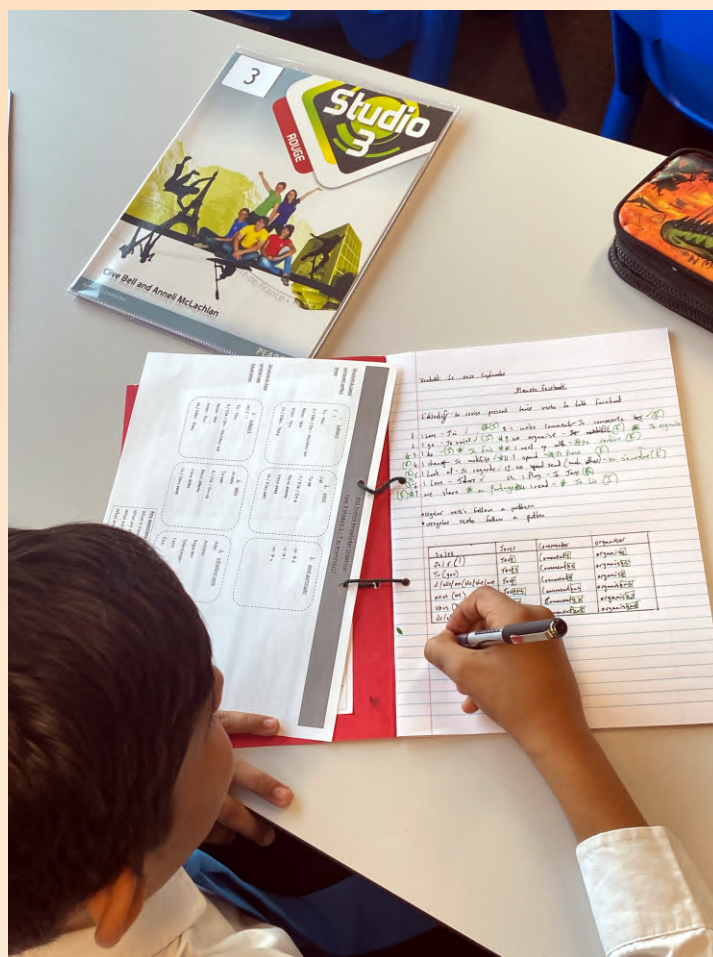
Year 9 Student Voice was busy feeding back their experience about learning, our learning mentors continued to offer support through weekly phone-calls and form group

competitions ran weekly.

The year team was really proud with how Year 9 stepped up to the challenges of remote learning and those who went above and beyond, even received a little token of recognition in the post!

Year 10

Year 10 really engaged well with the remote learning during lockdown.



Students were excellent during their live lessons and were really mature in being accountable for their own learning.

Attendance was very good with a number of students really stepping up to complete all of their work assigned to them on Show My Homework.

Some tutors set form challenges for the students to complete, for example Miss Farmer set a cooking challenge to try and get students to try and develop other skills whilst in lockdown.

The year 10 tutor team enjoyed their catch up phone calls with the students and it was nice to see how positive the majority were.

Some key students that stood out that I would like to congratulate are

Haram, Simona, Grace, Jaslin, Labiba, Sameer, Madison, Taranjit, Robert, Abjinder, Harashdeep, Thenuji, Bushra, and Abdiwali

Year 11

The sudden return to a national lockdown and closing of schools was a big shock for us all in January and it was clear that the work of our Year 11 form tutors would need to adapt to the changes made for us.

On a weekly basis, tutors played a huge role to bridge the gap between school and home by making regular contact with students and parents about a number of different things.

In addition to simply asking 'how have you been?', our team worked tirelessly, ensuring that the school's remote learning provision for Year 11 was set up for all students, who needed to know how to access their school Office and Show My Homework accounts daily.

This was also the time of year for Year 11 to make applications to Sixth Form and Colleges for September 2021, which tutors regularly checked in with them about.

We are proud to say that the vast majority of the year group know what their plans are for next year, where

their next destination in life is and that a large number have applied for study at Wexham Sixth form next year!

Medical work experience opportunities were also

seized upon by three of our students (Simra, Sian and Namra) who have taken their first steps to pursuing a career in either the NHS or medicine, generally.

I am immensely proud of all three for their proactive approach and for feeding back to me about their immensely positive experiences. I wish all three, and indeed the rest of their year group, the very best for the years that lie ahead.' -Mr

Phalora

6th Form

During the Lockdown, the Sixth Form team worked very hard to make sure that all the Sixth Formers were engaged in their lessons.

Tutors initially phoned student's homes to check on their wellbeing and mental health and were able to give advice where possible.

Some students were given new laptops to allow them access to live lessons and create a better opportunity for independent learning.

During the start of the lockdown, a few students had exams that they had to sit and despite the tough times and conditions they excelled and are very proud of their results.

Our assemblies were tailored as one to one session because it allowed me to speak to each student so that I can assess their learning experience to create room for improvement.

Miss Song worked with all the Yr. 13's to complete UCAS

applications in the lockdown and students have started to get offers from universities.

Overall it was an interesting experience for everyone in the Sixth form, students and staff alike. We all tried our best to work together for the best possible outcome which was coming back into school without any worries and this we achieved!.

