

# The Cottesloe School **SIXTH FORM**

Sixth Form News Summer 2019

We come to the end another eventful Year for the Cottesloe Sixth Form. It feels like this year has been more of a roller coaster ride than normal and the togetherness of our group has really been tested. As expected, the students have stepped up and we have made sure that everyone has made it across the line. The last main event was the Year 13 Prom, it was a great success. It was held at Woughton House in Milton Keynes for the first time.

I would like to take this final opportunity to congratulate the class of 2019 for all of their hard work and endeavour over the past two years, I am sure they will reap the rewards come results day in August. I would also like to thank the staff for their unwavering help and support for all of the students during their time here. We are truly blessed with teachers and support staff that enable students to walk into those exams with the confidence of knowing that they are ready to take on the competition. Our Head Students deserve a special mention for their hard work this year. Olly Rigby, Eleanor Johnston, Ashley Cook and Beth Featonby-Roberts have led by example and provided role models for students throughout the school.

It was inspirational to see students who left last year returning to help Year 12 with their UCAS preparation and to catch up on how they have fared in their first Year at University. It is really important that a student's sixth form experience prepares them for the next step in a holistic sense, not merely academically. It is very reassuring to get such positive feedback from former students at every stage of their career. The life skills element is something that we will continue to develop in the future reflecting the demands of life within the school and beyond. **Mr Youngs, Head of Sixth Form.**



**Safe Drive Stay Alive** Year 12 took their annual trip to Milton Keynes for the car safety presentation by the combined Emergency Services. Each year it seems to get better and there is no question the hard hitting approach certainly stays with the students. Indeed, the phrase 'safe drive stay alive' has become a tag line for students whenever the subject of car safety arises. It comes at a perfect time for Year 12 as they reach 17 and are able to take their test. I personally believe that it is the message to passengers as well as drivers that they are all responsible for the safety of all those in the car that is most important. The event is always followed up in Year 13 with a refresher presentation by Keith Wheeler from the Buckinghamshire Fire Service to remind students of a message that could save lives.

## **Geography Dorset Trip**

An exciting part of our A Level Geography course is to complete a set amount of field studies. Getting to know our peers and teachers better, as well as gaining experience of creating our own investigation, the likes of which we will be completing independently at University is a fantastic opportunity. For part of this, we visited Dorset on a residential trip to investigate sand dune succession in Studland. We also had the chance to explore the Jurassic Coastlines dynamic landscape, look around Swanage by ourselves and get involved with group work. To see what we spend much time in the classroom learning about in front of us to experience and analyse was remarkable and I feel I have benefited from it a great deal. **Gemma Laker, Year 12.**



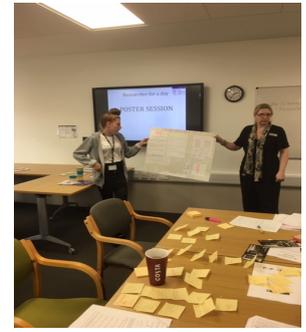
## **Futures Fair, Bedford University**

As part of the Sixth Form at the Cottesloe School we visit many different exhibitions to help aid us in choosing our career path post-sixth form. The exhibition introduced me to a wide range of different academic and career opportunities that I had not yet discovered. It gave me a very good insight into what life is like on a university campus and university life in general. It was a perfect opportunity to ask important questions to current students. The event also offered many topical seminars, inspirational talks and interactive stands which added to the day.

**Olly Ryan, Year 12**

## Psychology Active Research Day – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019

The University of Buckingham hosted an Active Psychology Research Day. Psychology lecturers led research groups, Dr Gillian Hill, Dr Rhiannon Edwards and Linda Luckhurst offered different research opportunities. Zoe Curtis (yellow group) and Olly Ryan (red) have reflected on the day below:



The research day located at the Vinson building at The University of Buckingham allowed us as students to experience a university setting as we have time to speak with the lecturers whilst also further expanding our knowledge on psychology. In the yellow research group, we formed a study with aims to see whether memory worsens when multitasking with a mobile phone. We initially researched any previous evidence supporting our hypothesis and then we formed questions for the memory test and as a group discussed the method and procedures that we needed to conduct. This is an example of quantitative research as we used independent groups design and we had to use a T test to find whether our results were significant which they were.

Meanwhile the red group carried out a qualitative thematic analysis study. For this they created a research question investigating the link between why stress occurs and the coping mechanisms used by adults. Once we had gathered and processed our data we had to present our findings in the form of a 'poster presentation'.



This experience enabled us to understand more about the University learning environment. We found Buckingham University to be welcoming, well organised and an excellent academic environment. It also helped us improve our communication skills and team work as we had to work within small groups and then present our findings in front of the whole group including the lecturers.

*(Photo left—Yellow group led by Psychology Lecturer, Linda Luckhurst investigating the influence of mobile phones on memory.)*

## The National Apprenticeship Show

Year 12 attended the National Apprenticeship Show in Milton Keynes which introduced me to a vast range of career options that I had not yet discovered. This is because throughout the day we had the opportunity to walk around the stadium and speak with a variety of providers to understand what they were offering and how it could benefit our futures. The apprenticeship show enabled me to understand that an apprentice is a productive and effective way for a person to become skilled, qualified and motivated within a fast paced environment where they experience their specific chosen workforce. It allows young people to begin training within a real working environment which provides them with experience and skills that can potentially lead them to a full time job upon the completion of their course. It is an excellent alternative career options for those that are not suited to a university environment. **Zoe Curtis, Year 12**





## Restart A Heart

I am really proud to say that all members of the Sixth Form completed a first aid course designed to equip them with the skills they need to resuscitate someone if they have a cardiac arrest. A huge thanks goes to Alex and Liz Richards from ALR Training who provide the course free of charge. Some students are keen to progress to the full course and we hope to give them that opportunity next year.

## Somerville College, Oxford

On the 27th of February, the Sixth Form gave us the opportunity to visit Somerville College at Oxford University. We experienced a day in the life of a university student, participating in a sample lecture of Classics, touring Somerville College's facilities and accommodation and a support lecture and practical at the Museum of Natural History. Whilst getting an insight into the nature of university lectures, we also gained information and advice on the application process involved with Oxbridge. Not only this, we also gained support with the process of choosing courses that would accommodate our interests and passions. Through conversations with Oxford University students, we were able to ask any questions about the process of university, including joining societies and financial worries we had. The trip to Oxford greatly prepared the group for the process of applying to universities, allowing our choices to be supported and guided by the help of the students we were able to speak to. **Charlie Baldwin, Year 12.**



## Work shadowing Experiences



When I leave Sixth Form I aspire to become a midwife. For my work shadowing placement, I went to Stoke Mandeville hospital for two days and was placed in the Early Pregnancies Department for my first day and the Antenatal / Postnatal Department for my second day.

When I was in the Early Pregnancies Department I was paired with a nurse who analysed the ultrasound scans of a foetus and then later that day I sat in on some general check-up appointments to check if the development of a baby was continuing as normal.

On my second day when I was on Antenatal / Postnatal ward, I was paired with a maternity cover assistant who works alongside the midwives to ensure that there are no issues with the mother and baby, before and after birth. It was interesting to see how the mother and baby are cared for when they are not on the labour ward. I thoroughly enjoyed my time on my work shadowing placement and it has helped fuel my desire to become a midwife. **Elsbeth Eley Year 12**

On the week commencing the 3rd June 2019, the Sixth Form allowed me to acquire the opportunity to shadow a Crown Court Judge, H.H Judge Sheridan. Through the Sixth Form's work shadowing program, I gained the ability to experience an insight into the world of law, an interest I wish to pursue in further education. The subject of law is a heavy commitment and due to my work shadowing, it personally confirmed for me that this was definitely a career I wish to follow. It gave me a glimpse into the potential future I may be involved in, teaching me basic skills of communication, co-operation and most importantly listening.

Despite learning these skills in the work environment, it allowed me to apply them to my work at the Sixth Form, especially in Law A Level. In addition to this, my work shadowing enabled me to make connections with others in the legal profession, even allowing me to make future plans of work shadowing with the profession. I also gained guidance on the best universities that will aid me in pursuing a career in law, this advice enabled me to make specific university decisions. It was an opportunity that will definitely stick with me through my education.

**Charlie Baldwin, Year 12**



## The new curse of all Sixth Forms!!!

This year reached an all time high for unconditional university offers. Last year the national figure reached 35% and I am confident that the figure will exceed that this year. Whilst on the surface this feels like a 'dream ticket' for students, it is in fact, fraught with dangers. They are being offered by universities in order to secure students. It will leave others to speculate their motivation for this policy but it is fair to say it is widespread and involves the majority of universities. It should be noted however that some are much more guilty of it than others with the worst offenders making well in excess of 70% of their offers unconditional. A total of 87,540 students received unconditional offers last year. Matt Waddup, Head of Policy and Campaigns at the university and college union said, 'unconditional offers make a mockery of exams and put students under enormous pressure to make snap decisions about their future'.

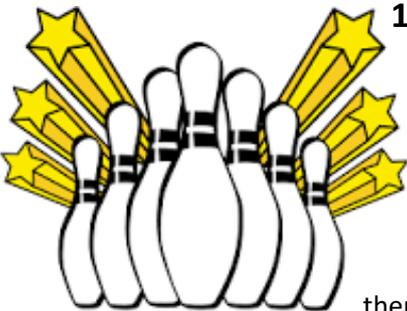
There are two significant and worrying problems associated with this type of offer. Firstly, they are normally conditional on you putting that university as your first choice (known as a conditional unconditional). This is very appealing to students as it takes the pressure off them to achieve high grades and have been many instances where students have taken this offer instead of a more ambitious one at a higher ranked university. Secondly, irrespective of the motivation of the student, there is an inevitable tendency to sit back a little in the knowledge that you have secured a place. To be fair to our students, this is often a subconscious thing that they only recognise in hind sight. This factor was evidenced in recent statistics that have been released by UCAS which estimated that students who held an unconditional offer frequently missed their predicted A Level grades by two or more whole grades. Interestingly, those who held a conditional offer generally achieved their target grade, with those who turned down an unconditional offer **over achieving** by at least half a grade on average. In addition to these short term affects, students can be disadvantaged in the future as 'A' Levels are becoming increasingly relevant post- university and throughout their career.

Some universities such as Nottingham have decided that they will no longer make these kinds of offers and it is my hope that pressure from the media and the Government will encourage more to do so. If you would like more information there are presentations and a parental leaflet on the school website in the Sixth Form area.

## Wellbeing



The Cottesloe School is well known for its supportive and nurturing approach and we are looking to further develop this aspect of the Sixth Form. As well as support from 'the link', Mrs Brimmell, the school Well Being Officer is running some sessions for students who feel that they would appreciate some regular on-going support. I would like to push this a little more and encourage students to take advantage of this service. With such an emphasis on physical health and its links to better academic performance, it seems only sensible to try to improve your mental health which is, in my opinion, even more significant in terms of performance at work. I would also point students to links on the school website to various help groups for those who do not want to speak to somebody in school.



## 10 Pin Bowling – Are you serious?

We are taking the day off and going bowling – sometimes we need to retrieve Year 13 from their revision orbit and bring them back down to earth momentarily. An idea that must be credited to Mr Matcham was half reward and half therapy for students who were working to the extreme and needed a time out. I was really pleased with the way it was received and it is something that we really must do more of throughout the year. It is a reminder that we must recognise the pressure under which the students put themselves and how it must be carefully managed. The only complaint came from a member of the public in lane one who got upset by the fact that his pins kept getting knocked over by Tracey who was bowling in lane 14. In fact, she totally monopolised the lane for 45 minutes during one attempt to bowl the ball close enough to Milton Keynes in order that the computer registered any kind of delivery. On one occasion she travelled further down the lane than the ball!



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