1 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Ref: UCAS Applications 2021

We hope that this email finds you and your families safe and well. We have tried to maintain contact during the lockdown through our weekly bulletins; in addition to bespoke presentations about higher education as well as advice on the process of applying to university. We hope that you have found these useful.

We thought that you might find it constructive to have a timeline of what needs to be done prior to the end of this academic year to ensure that your son/daughter is prepared for the UCAS applications process for 2021.

Here's an outline of what they need to have actioned over the course of the next few weeks:
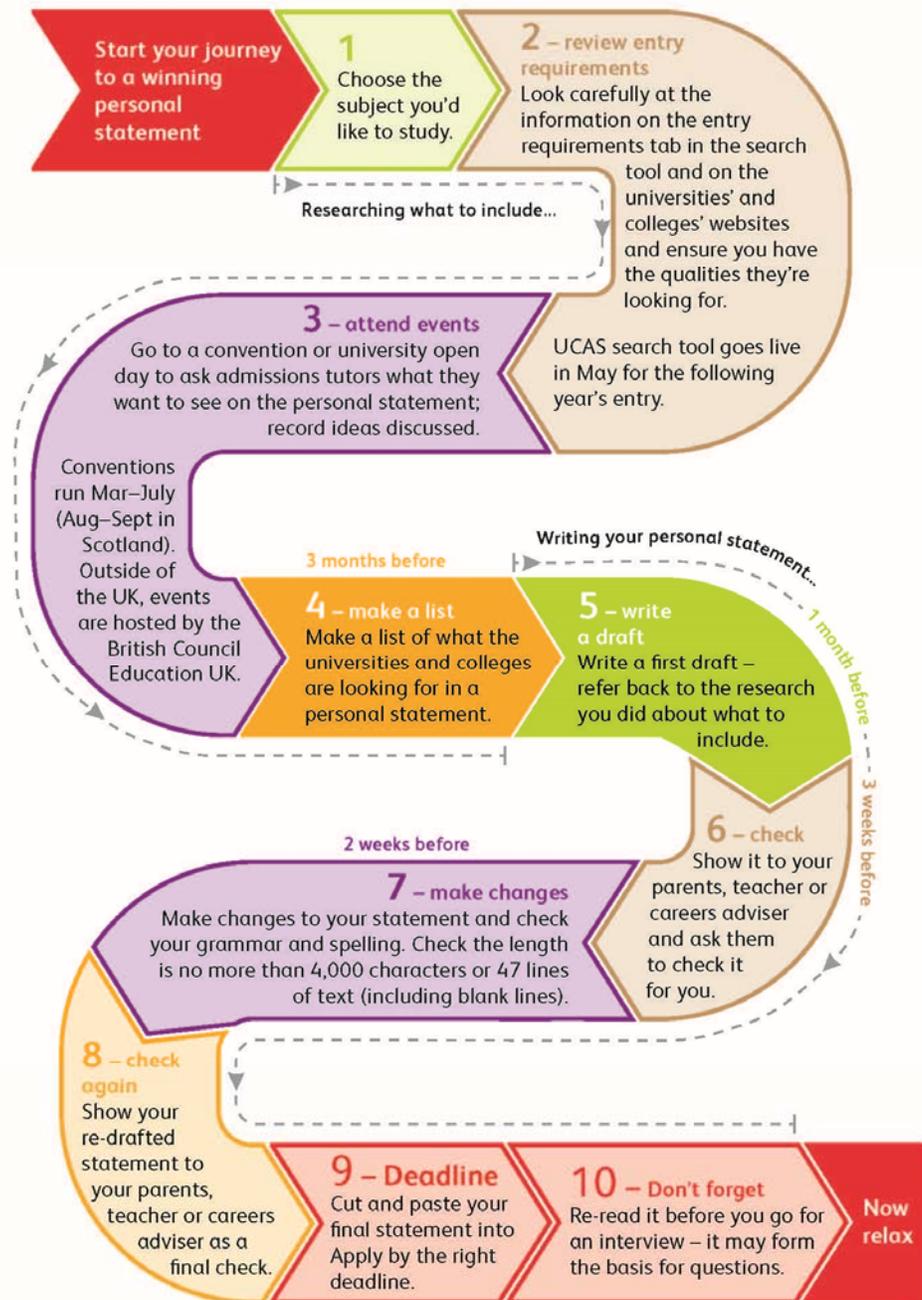
w/b 11th MAY 2020	Students should have 'selected' their teachers on Unifrog as this will enable them to start writing their references
19th MAY 2020	Year 12 students can register on the UCAS hub & start researching courses and institutions (slides providing guidance on this were circulated on 19th May). We would welcome any questions about this and will advise as best we can
w/b 1st JUNE 2020	The students would have been completing their progression exams; as these have understandably been cancelled for this academic year then it's vital that all set work is completed and submitted as this will be used in helping teachers to formulate predicted grades for UCAS
JULY 2020	Personal Statement – first draft completed and checked. You will find below some advice on putting this together

If there's anything further that you need to know then please do not hesitate to contact us via sixthform@redborne.com

Yours sincerely

Mr R Woodward
Head of Sixth Form

My personal statement timeline

Start your journey to a winning personal statement

1 Choose the subject you'd like to study.

2 – review entry requirements
Look carefully at the information on the entry requirements tab in the search tool and on the universities' and colleges' websites and ensure you have the qualities they're looking for.

UCAS search tool goes live in May for the following year's entry.

Researching what to include…

3 – attend events
Go to a convention or university open day to ask admissions tutors what they want to see on the personal statement; record ideas discussed.

Conventions run Mar–July (Aug–Sept in Scotland). Outside of the UK, events are hosted by the British Council Education UK.

Writing your personal statement…

3 months before

4 – make a list
Make a list of what the universities and colleges are looking for in a personal statement.

5 – write a draft
Write a first draft – refer back to the research you did about what to include.

1 month before – – – 3 weeks before

6 – check
Show it to your parents, teacher or careers adviser and ask them to check it for you.

2 weeks before

7 – make changes
Make changes to your statement and check your grammar and spelling. Check the length is no more than 4,000 characters or 47 lines of text (including blank lines).

8 – check again
Show your re-drafted statement to your parents, teacher or careers adviser as a final check.

9 – Deadline
Cut and paste your final statement into Apply by the right deadline.

10 – Don't forget
Re-read it before you go for an interview – it may form the basis for questions.

Now relax

UCAS

Give yourself time to plan and write your personal statement

Top tips for writing your personal statement:

- **Do** show you know your strengths, and outline your ideas clearly.
- **Do** be enthusiastic – if you show you're interested in the course, it may help you get a place.
- **Do** expect to produce several drafts of your personal statement before being totally happy with it.
- **Do** ask people you trust for their feedback
- **Don't** be tempted to buy or copy a personal statement, or share yours. All personal statements are checked for similarity – if your personal statement is flagged as similar to other applicants, it could affect your chances of being offered a place.
- **Don't** exaggerate – if you do, you may get caught out in an interview when asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.
- **Don't** rely on a spellchecker, as it will not pick up everything – proofread as many times as possible.
- **Don't** leave it to the last minute – your statement will seem rushed, and important information could be left out.
- **Don't** let spelling and grammatical errors spoil your statement.

What happens to personal statements that have been copied?

Every personal statement received by UCAS is added to our personal statement library, which means we're able to quickly identify if your personal statement is similar to someone else's.

Once we receive your application, your personal statement is scanned by our Copycatch system – if your statement shows a similarity of 10% or more, it will be flagged.

Where similarities are confirmed, the universities, colleges, and applicant are notified at the same time. The university and college admissions staff will then decide what action to take.

Your personal statement will not be compared to your earlier applications if you have applied in previous cycles or schemes.

Acing your Personal Statement!

Description
Get prepared for writing your Personal Statement with the help of our guides, wider reading materials and statement writing tool.

For this session, you'll need the following Unifrog tools:
- Know-how library guides
- Subjects library
- Personal Statement tool
- Activities/Competencies tool

If, to start with, you are still not sure which subject you want to study, use the following to give you inspiration:
- Personality quiz
- Careers library
- Subject library

Why do this?
Completing these tasks will make sure you're well on your way to acing your Personal Statement, ready for those all-important UCAS applications!

Task 1:

Start with the basics. If you know which topic you would like to study, go to the Subjects library first. This will give you a great starting point in writing a winning personal statement.

There are over 50,000 undergraduate courses, so make sure to research all the topic areas and similar subjects around your interests. Below is an example of what you'd see if you search for 'Business':

Then select the subject that you would like to study, and you will see a profile that looks like this:

This subject profile will give you a good understanding of everything you need for your Personal Statement, especially our Geek Out section! Let's start by using this to complete the table below. This could either be a 'To-Do' list for you, or 'Done List':

Type of activity	Considerations	Evidence
Group work example	What group academic work can I use to show I work well with others?	
Independent work example	What independent academic project have I undertaken related to my degree subject?	
Wider reading	What have I studied outside of the classroom that shows I have a passion for this subject?	
MOOC	Which MOOC did I find relates to my subject area and what did I learn from it?	
Competencies	What are the key skills that I need to succeed at this subject? What examples do I have that show I have these skills?	
Extracurricular Activities	What activities have I done that are relevant for this subject, e.g. work experience, volunteering, clubs, societies?	

Task 2:

After completing your table, go to the Activities and Competencies tools to write about your examples. You may find there are gaps and that you need to set tasks to complete over the summer. Start with the Activities:

Add activity

Record what you've done.

* Your role	eg 'Babysitter for 2 energetic siblings'

0 of 50 characters

What type of activity was it?
Each activity can only be associated with one type.
Check how to define the different types ⌄

* Activity type	---- select an activity type ---- ⬍

Description + achievements
Write like a boss by following these 5 tips ⌄

* Description	eg 'Regularly look after younger siblings. Cook healthy dinner, ensure they do their homework. At times their behaviour is challenging. Keep calm and firm.'

After writing your role, select the activity type. When describing what you did, use these five tips:

- Emphasise the tangible, measurable impact of what you did
- Be specific
- Use the present tense if it is something you still do
- For each activity include any responsibilities you had
- Explain the significance of the activity

Writing in this way is good practice for when you start your Personal Statement. Read what you have written and try to reduce the amount of words you have used to say something. The skill in any writing activity is to draft, and redraft, so that you revise your text to say exactly what you want, nothing more.

Scroll down to move on to Competencies!

Task 2 continued…

Now let's add some Competencies to evidence your skill set:

unifrog   HOME   SHORTLISTS   LOCKER   APPLY   HELP   ⚙   ✉   [

Universities and employers look for twelve star competencies
Record examples of you demonstrating each of these competencies. Then use this material for your applications.

You're missing examples
12 star competencies where you're missing examples at the appropriate level. Why these competencies and levels? ⌄

+ Add example

Think about the key competencies mentioned in the Subjects library. What skills do you already have examples for? Try to use the STAR method for writing about skills:

- Situation
- Task
- Action
- Result

Each bullet shouldn't need more than two sentences, one if possible. Always refer to a specific situation when talking about a skill and don't generalise. Again, when writing, stick to the point, be specific, and redraft afterward to revise the text.

Task 3:

You should now almost be ready to start your Personal Statement in Unifrog, after completing most of your Personal Statement Prep To-Do-List. Before you do, read through the relevant information in the Know-How Library. In the keyword search type in 'personal statement'.

Look for the article, "Writing like a boss: the Personal Statement".

Writing like a boss: the Personal Statement
12 tips for acing the UK Personal Statement

Watch the video and read the guidance. There is a lot to take in, so favourite the video and refer to it as often as needed.

There is also lots of guidance in the Know-how library on Oxbridge, wider-reading, MOOCs, and other topics relevant to university applications.

Task 4:

You're now ready to go and start your Personal Statement. Even if you are undecided on the exact subject, you can still make a start on some aspects of it. If you have chosen a subject to apply for, write it in the **ADD SUBJECT** box.

You will notice that there is guidance in each section on how to write in line with the focus for that part. The Personal Statement builder saves the text as you write it and character counts as you type. Don't worry if you exceed the 4000-character count in your first draft as this is recommended. Remember, 'draft, redraft'. Redraft and revise until you are happy with it and use the example Personal Statements in the subject library as a guide only. Don't be tempted to plagiarise!

You can change the Personal Statement builder from three sections to a single box layout. If you have already started to write your Personal Statement elsewhere, Copy and paste it into the builder. Your teachers can automatically see your statement and give you guidance quicker if it is in Unifrog.