



The Thomas Hardy School

QUEENS AVENUE DORCHESTER DT1 2ET

Headteacher
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Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to let you know that the Thomas Hardy Futures' programme has commenced for our new year 12 year group. This programme will run for the duration of your child's time in sixth form and will cover all post-18 options and support whichever pathway your son/daughter decides to pursue.

On Wednesday 18th October we launched this programme with our FUTURES 1 session, when the students were off timetable for lessons 1 and 2 to find out about the options available to them when they leave school. We provide this information at an early date to ensure our students can be as prepared as possible to make highly competitive applications in their chosen field.

Futures morning 1 comprised of

- Lesson 1 Applying to University - led by our Director of Higher Education, Chris Sainsbury, who covered the reasons and benefits of applying for university, the types of courses available and what to consider when selecting a course.
- Lesson 2 Employment and Higher Apprenticeships - led by our Director of Professional Pathways, Vicky Needham who explained what a higher apprenticeship is, the benefits of applying, where to study and best routes in to employment.

During the morning, the students had the opportunity to meet our Ansbury in-school Careers' Advisor and our Work Experience Coordinator. Students can make an appointment with our Work Experience Coordinator, Karen Weir, during their two years of study to arrange work experience and we strongly recommend that students take advantage of this opportunity to support their personal development whilst in sixth form. Similarly students can book an appointment with our Careers Advisor, Clare Hymas, to support their decision making and to receive impartial advice.

After half term, on Thursday 2nd November, Bristol University will lead a presentation about applying to competitive universities. I strongly recommend that that your son/daughter attends this talk to gain further insight of what admissions tutors require when selecting students for interview or granting conditional offers. We are very proud that every year around 40% of students gain places at the more competitive universities and last year 96% of students who applied to university gained a place on their chosen courses. This is a fantastic success rate and is testament to the thorough and expert advice they receive from our staff, but also due to the wide ranging opportunities that we can offer.

In addition to outstanding grades, students at The Thomas Hardy Sixth Form demonstrate that they have extended their learning beyond the curriculum and have enriched their knowledge and personal development through extra-curricular involvement and wider reading, allowing them to stand out from other applicants.

In support of developing student interest and independence, this year we are asking all year 12 students to complete one of the hundreds of on-line courses from Future Learn. On Thursday 19th October, Mr Bewley launched this initiative during their Guided Learning session. Every course is run and designed by a leading

Leadership Team

Mrs N Bousfield BA
Mrs L Cheney BEd
Mrs K Chittenden BA
Mr I Cornell BSc
Mr J Dean BSc
Dr T Ennion BSc PhD
Mrs L Morrison BEng





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university and has excellent, well planned and resourced content. Courses last around 3-6 weeks allowing our students to showcase their passion, curiosity and engagement in their learning.

Next term will also see a programme of university course discussion groups in every academic subject across the curriculum, run by members of staff. In these groups students will examine reasons to study that subject, potential career avenues, variations in courses and preparation for applying. Our Year 12 students can decide which of these groups they would like to attend and can go to as many as they wish.

This year I am pleased to announce that we will have professional discussion groups running when we invite outside speakers to lead discussions in academic and professional disciplines which are not within the typical school curriculum and a presentation from Yeovil College about their higher apprenticeships. Details of the timings of these discussion groups will be shared with students after half term and details will also be on our website.

Can I also remind you that Miss Platt has informally launched the Early Applicants Programme and has already had guest speakers and former students in to school to provide advice and guidance for those who are considering making an application to Oxford or Cambridge or to study medicine, veterinary science or dentistry. Registrations for this programme are still open until November 1st, so if your son/ daughter is interested and aiming for Grade As or higher in their A-levels, please could they complete the registration form (which has been emailed to them) and return this to the sixth form office; alternatively they can contact Miss Platt or speak to their tutor. Students should ensure they regularly check their school email for details of the first seminar in late November. Registering does not commit them to applying as Early Applicants next year but if they may be interested it is important that they receive appropriate support at an early stage.

We are very lucky to have many fantastic contacts in the surrounding area and former students to support us in the delivery of our Futures' programme. If you know of anyone who might be able to support any of the initiatives outlined in this letter, and would be willing to come in to school, I'd be very grateful to receive their names and contact details.

Please be assured that we are not putting any pressure on our year 12 students to make big decisions about their future when they have only just started their A-level courses. At this stage we are providing information to help them to navigate the wealth of opportunities they have before them and to ensure they make the very best start to their sixth form education. There will be further details of the next stage of the programme in the New Year which will include a parents' information evening.

Yours faithfully

Mrs K A Taylor
Head of Year 12

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