

# UCAS Admissions Student Support Information for Aldridge School – An Academy

Aldridge School is a large co-educational Comprehensive School and a founder member of the Mercian Trust. The school offers a wide range of A Level and vocational courses and works closely with other schools within the MAT. In 2018/2021 all students are currently studying a minimum of three A-Level subjects or equivalent. Students were denied direct face-to-face access to teachers and support staff, missing 15 weeks of lessons. Although lessons were uploaded onto Google classroom, our preferred platform during lockdown, completion of this work was very much at the students discretion. Some students found it difficult to access and complete the work, due to juggling the additional responsibilities enforced on them during lockdown eg; limited internet access or computer access. Staff were encouraging in their contact with students, which was predominantly via email, however, this could never replace the face-to-face daily contact that students thrive on.

We have an imbedded UCAS application programme, which is introduced to students in January/February time in year 12. Fortunately, we had been able to deliver an introduction session so they had some knowledge of the UCAS process. However, due to the disruption we were unable to invite visitors into the school to highlight the benefits of further studies at university and the opportunities that it would bring, likewise for the different apprenticeships on offer, and how to apply for them. Instead of talking to students through the registration process, instructions were shared through google classrooms, for students to access at their convenience. We also offer students the opportunity for a mock interview, from business people within the local area to help prepare for their next steps. Students have also been affected by the lack of careers fairs that they were able to attend, visiting a university virtually has not had the same reaction from students. We encourage students to participate in as many extra-curricular activities as possible, with work experience being a vital part of their enrichment programme, matching opportunities available to students prospective careers. This provides them with a valuable insight into the field in which they wish to work.

Students are informed at the beginning of their sixth form journey, when assessments will be taking place during the course, and are encourage to prepare for them. We have a robust end of year 12 examination system in place, whereby students sit exams in as close to examination conditions as possible. These have proved to be highly successful and provide the basis of the predicted grades provided to UCAS. The students have not had the opportunity to sit these exams, and this has had a detrimental effect on students confidence in their own abilities. It has also increased anxiety levels in students regarding personal performance in their examinations.