**“Exceptional Outcomes in Extraordinary Circumstances”**
***Brighton Girls A Level Results 2020***

After months of speculation and uncertainty, following the cancellation of public examinations in March, Brighton Girls today celebrated the achievements of our Year 13 leavers with the publication of A Level results. An incredibly strong cohort of students achieved a superb set of grades. Over 60% of grades awarded were A\* or A and 25% of the year group achieved straight A\*/As, including Rani (A\*A\*A\*A\* and A\* in EPQ), who is heading to Queen’s College, Oxford, to read Philosophy, Politics and Economics; Eva (A\*A\*A\*), who will take up her place at Newnham College, Cambridge, to read Archaeology; and Kiana (A\*A\*A and an A in EPQ) who has been awarded a scholarship to study Medicine at Leicester.

Rosie McColl, Head of Brighton Girls, commented: “This talented year group has achieved exceptional outcomes in the most extraordinary circumstances. Having undertaken the unusual process of submitting Centre Assessed Grades, which required us to scrutinise the way our students had performed throughout their two-year A Level courses, we were in no doubt about the significant academic abilities of this year’s leavers. I am delighted that, despite the difficult circumstances, the majority have been awarded the grades they deserved and are safely onto the next stage of their educational journeys. I wish to thank all the staff at Brighton Girls for the support they have given these students during their time at the school, and for the exciting enrichment opportunities they provided them during lockdown – it was great to see so many colleagues in school today to congratulate the girls on their achievements”.

In addition to achieving excellent grades in their A Level subjects, many leave Brighton Girls with top grades in their Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) – a qualification increasingly prized by universities as evidence of independent research and study skills. This year’s projects, which were wide-ranging in their subject-matter and impressive in their delivery, included a study on the phenomenon of blind sight and a project on how bio-mimicry can be used in architecture, for which aspiring architect, Sasha, created her own scale model of a home which would allow the occupants to harness green energy, improve waste disposal and “generally work with the environment rather than against it”.

“Exams are just one part of an individual’s educational experience”, said Rosie McColl, “and the events of the last few months have brought this into sharp relief. More important are the opportunities for confidence building and self-discovery that education provides. I have long maintained that schools should be judged not on exam results alone, nor on university destinations, but rather on the *range* of pathways being followed by its leavers. I am proud that we have helped our students to discover courses and future careers that span such broad range of interests. That our leavers are pursuing courses in everything from Architecture to Wildlife Conservation, from Forensic Science to the Performing Arts, and that one student, a budding entrepreneur, is all set to establish her own business, speaks for itself. We have provided the space and support to enable individuals to discover their passions and, in doing so, we have helped them on their way to what we hope will be a happy and successful future.”

Well done to the class of 2020 – a remarkable cohort in so many ways.

**Factbox**

*Brighton Girls will re-open to all year groups in September, providing high levels of academic and pastoral care to girls aged three to 18. We are fortunate to have the space and capacity to open all our sites safely and we look forward to welcoming all our students back into school for the new academic year. Having delivered a full timetable online throughout lockdown, showing incredible levels of resilience and creativity, our teachers are also looking forward to being back in the classroom for what will, no doubt, be another interesting year for us all.*

For more information, please contact Jenny Spires, Director of Marketing on j.spires@brightongirls.gdst.net or 01273 280 280

**Letter to All Parents (Prep and Senior)**

Dear Parents,

I hope you are enjoying a restful summer, that you are staying safe and well, and making the most of this glorious sunshine. After all the challenges of last term, I am writing to share some positive outcomes for our Year 13 leavers, as well as looking ahead briefly to September as we welcome all year groups back to school.

**A Level Results 2020**

After months of speculation and uncertainty, following the cancellation of public examinations in March, we were delighted to be able to celebrate the achievements of our Year 13 leavers with the publication of A Level results this morning. I am sure you will have been following the stories in the press about how A Level grades have been awarded this year, and are aware of the controversy surrounding the use of historical data as part of the exam boards’ standardisation process – and no doubt many of you have been baffled by some of the recent headlines, for example the Government’s eleventh-hour decision to allow individuals to appeal based on their mock results.

Having undertaken the unusual process of submitting Centre Assessed Grades, which required us to scrutinise the way our students had performed throughout their two-year A Level courses, we were in no doubt about the significant academic abilities of this year’s leavers. They are an incredibly strong cohort, made up of brilliant individuals.

I am delighted to report that this talented year group has achieved exceptional outcomes in the most extraordinary circumstances. They have achieved a superb set of grades. Like all schools, we have been impacted by the standardisation process in some areas but I am pleased that, despite the challenging circumstances, the majority achieved the grades they deserved and are safely moving on to the next stage of their educational journeys.

Over 60% of grades awarded were A\* or A and 25% of the year group achieved straight A\*/As. There are many outstanding individual achievements, including Rani (A\*A\*A\*A\* and A\* in EPQ), who is heading to Queen’s College, Oxford, to read Philosophy, Politics and Economics; Eva (A\*A\*A\*), who will take up her place at Newnham College, Cambridge, to read Archaeology; Kiana (A\*A\*A and an A in EPQ) who heads to the University of Leicester to study Medicine; Alice A\*AA who has been awarded a place at the BIMM Institute to study Performing Arts; and Head Girl, Clemmie (A\*AA), who heads to Bristol University to study for a degree in Law.

I wish to thank all the staff at Brighton Girls for the support they have given these students during their time at the school (some have been with us from Nursery) and also for the exciting enrichment opportunities and guidance they provided these girls after the sudden cancellation of their exams in March.

In addition to achieving excellent grades in their A Level subjects, many leave Brighton Girls with top grades in their Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) – a qualification increasingly prized by universities as evidence of independent research and study skills. This year’s projects, which were wide-ranging in their subject-matter and impressive in their delivery, included a study on the phenomenon of blind sight and a project on how bio-mimicry can be used in architecture, for which aspiring architect, Sasha, created her own scale model of a home which would allow the occupants to harness green energy, improve waste disposal and “generally work with the environment rather than against it”.

Exams are just one part of an individual’s educational experience and the events of the last few months have brought this into sharp relief. More important are the opportunities for confidence building and self-discovery that education provides. I have long maintained that schools should be judged not on exam results alone, nor on university destinations, but rather on the *range* of pathways being followed by its leavers. I am proud that we have helped our students to discover courses and future careers that span such broad range of interests. That our leavers are pursuing courses in everything from Architecture to Wildlife Conservation, from Forensic Science to the Performing Arts, and that one student, a budding entrepreneur, is all set to establish her own business, speaks for itself. We have provided the space and support to enable individuals to discover their passions and, in doing so, we have helped them on their way to what we hope will be a happy and successful future.

Well done to the class of 2020 – a remarkable cohort in so many ways.

**A Safe Return to School in September**

We are looking forward to welcoming all year groups back to school in September and we are confident that we have everything in place to allow us to return to relative normality. I appreciate that some parents and students will feel anxious about the months ahead and we will continue to work with you, through regular communication and regular parent feedback, as we embark on this next phase. We have prepared a ‘Return to School’ handbook, aimed at both parents and students, which provides detailed information about the additional health and safety measures we have put in place on each site for September, information about what to expect in classrooms and at every stage of the school day, as well as an explanation of procedures in the event of an individual displaying Covid symptoms, either at home or while at school. We will send digital copies of the handbook in good time before the start of Autumn Term and will reiterate and explain procedures to all students on their first day back. The arrangements for the Prep school will remain as at the end of last term, where all year groups were back in school. Below is a list of the key measures we have put in place throughout the school from September:

**Enhanced Cleaning**We have introduced enhanced cleaning and have extended our cleaning provision to allow for additional cleaning throughout the school day, including the cleaning of frequently touched surfaces, and thorough cleaning at the end of the school day.

**Year Group Bubbles**The Government guidance allows for whole year group bubbles (regardless of year size) but, having looked at our spaces and numbers, we have been able to ensure bubbles are kept to a relatively small size, adding an additional level of safety to our community. Year 12 and 13 will form one bubble, allowing them to operate as a Sixth Form unit. In addition, we have adjusted the room timetables and have staggered lunchtimes to minimise the risk of mixing between year groups. As an added precaution, we will ask students to socialise only with members of their smaller form groups at break times to minimise mixing within bubbles. Teachers will be free to move between bubbles, but they will maintain a distance of two metres at all times – classrooms have been rearranged with all desks facing the front and to allow teachers to observe the two-metre rule.

**Designated Entrance/Exit Points and Temperature Checks**

Each year group will be given a designated entrance and exit point to avoid students coming into contact with individuals outside their year group bubble. There will be a quick temperature check as students enter the school.

**Hand-washing and Hand-sanitising Stations**

Hand-washing and hand-sanitising stations will be more visible in school and regular hand-washing will be built into the school day. COVID-19 is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin, and this can be achieved with soap and hot running water or hand sanitiser. At school, we will ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating. As stated in the Government guidance, “regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future” so it is important that this forms part of our daily routine. In addition, we will provide daily reminders about correct respiratory hygiene, reinforcing the ‘catch it, bin it’ advice.

**One-way Systems**

When moving around the school, one-way systems will be indicated to ensure that year group bubbles do not mix and to encourage individuals to maintain a safe from others at all times.

**A Note on Face Masks**

Based on current evidence, Public Health England does not recommend the use of face coverings in schools. There are two main reasons for this: students and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. As students and staff would need to remove and reapply their masks frequently during the school day, the potential for misuse is higher and therefore there is an added risk of infection. Having assessed the risks, alongside the measures we have put in place (the use of small year group bubbles, the spacing and one-way systems in corridors, and the additional hand cleaning routines), we have decided that face masks are not required in school. However, this, along with every aspect of the guidance we have put together, will be kept under review. In addition to students and staff who choose to wear a mask, there are three other situations in which face masks will be required:

* Students and staff must wear a mask when travelling to school on public transport (except for children under the age of 11
* Students using the school minibus service will be required to wear a mask while on the bus, this will provide an additional level of safety as students from different year groups will be using the minibuses on journeys to and from school
* Students attending homework club must bring a mask with them – this is to allow an additional level of safety if numbers require us to place students from different year groups in the same room.

We also understand that some individuals, particularly in the Senior school, may choose to wear a mask, and this of course will be permitted. We will work with you and your daughters to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and that, as a community, we are accepting of each other’s choices. This message is contained in the student handbook and will be communicated clearly to all the girls at the start of term.

Next week will see the publication of GCSE results and I will provide another update at that point. In the meantime, I hope you continue to enjoy the summer.

With best wishes,



Rosie McColl