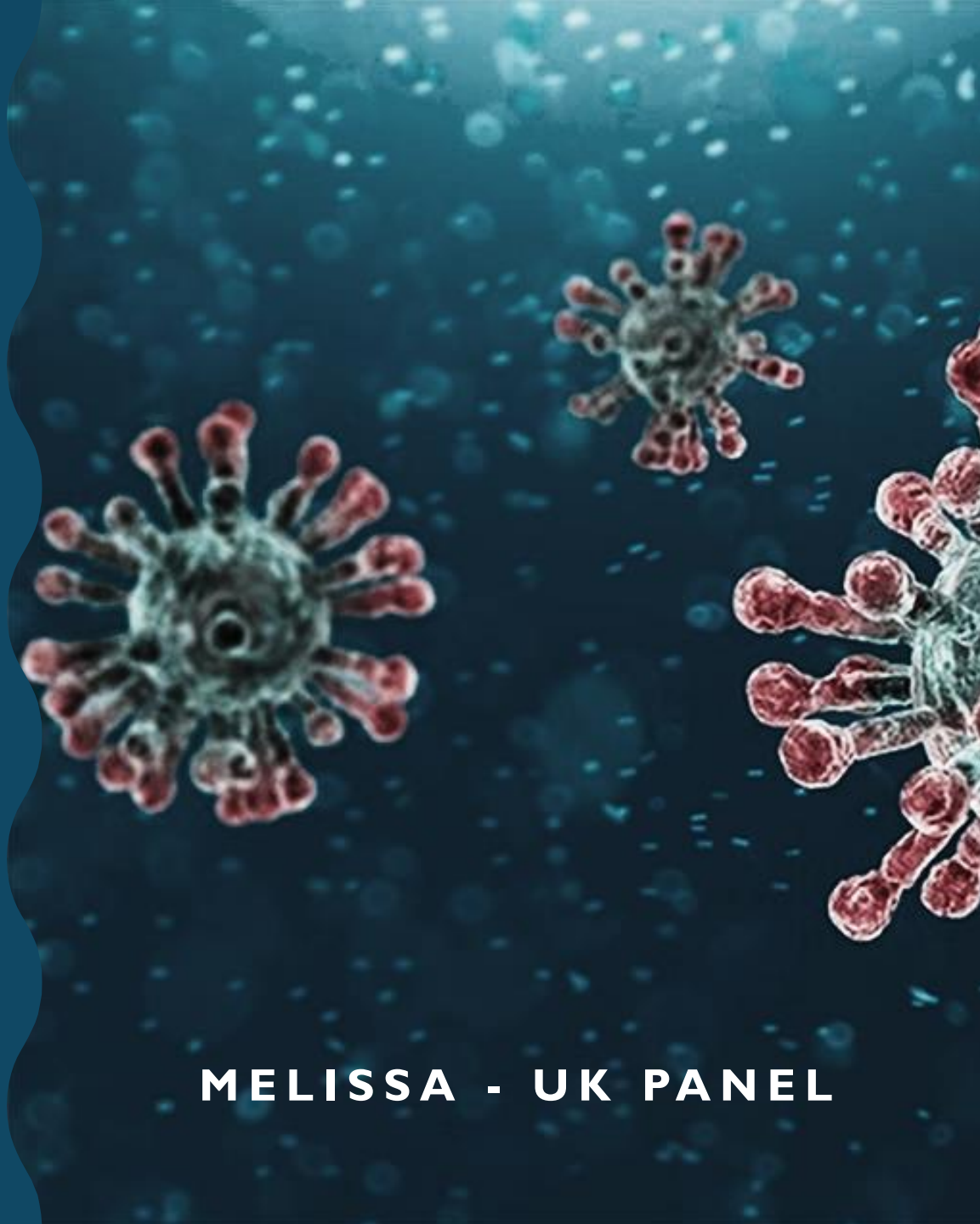
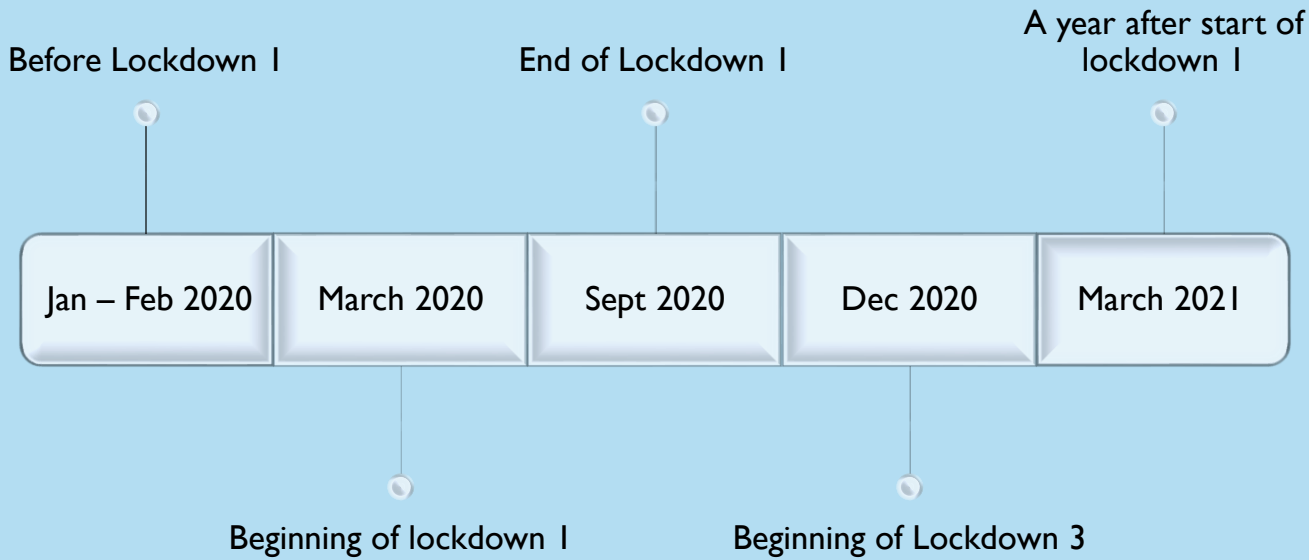


# A YEAR FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS

MARCH 2020 → MARCH 2021

MELISSA - UK PANEL





**SO MUCH HAS  
HAPPENED FROM  
MARCH 2020 TO  
MARCH 2021**

**PEOPLE CHANGED.**

**THE WORLD  
CHANGED.**

**LIFE AS WE KNOW  
IT HAS CHANGED.**

# LIFE BEFORE LOCKDOWN I

WHEN THE CORONAVIRUS FIRST SURFACED AT THE END OF 2019, I WAS IN YEAR 12 (SIXTH FORM/COLLEGE), IN MY FIRST YEAR OF A-LEVELS.

WE SAW CASES RISING, BUT LIFE WENT ON AS IF NOTHING WAS HAPPENING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLANET.

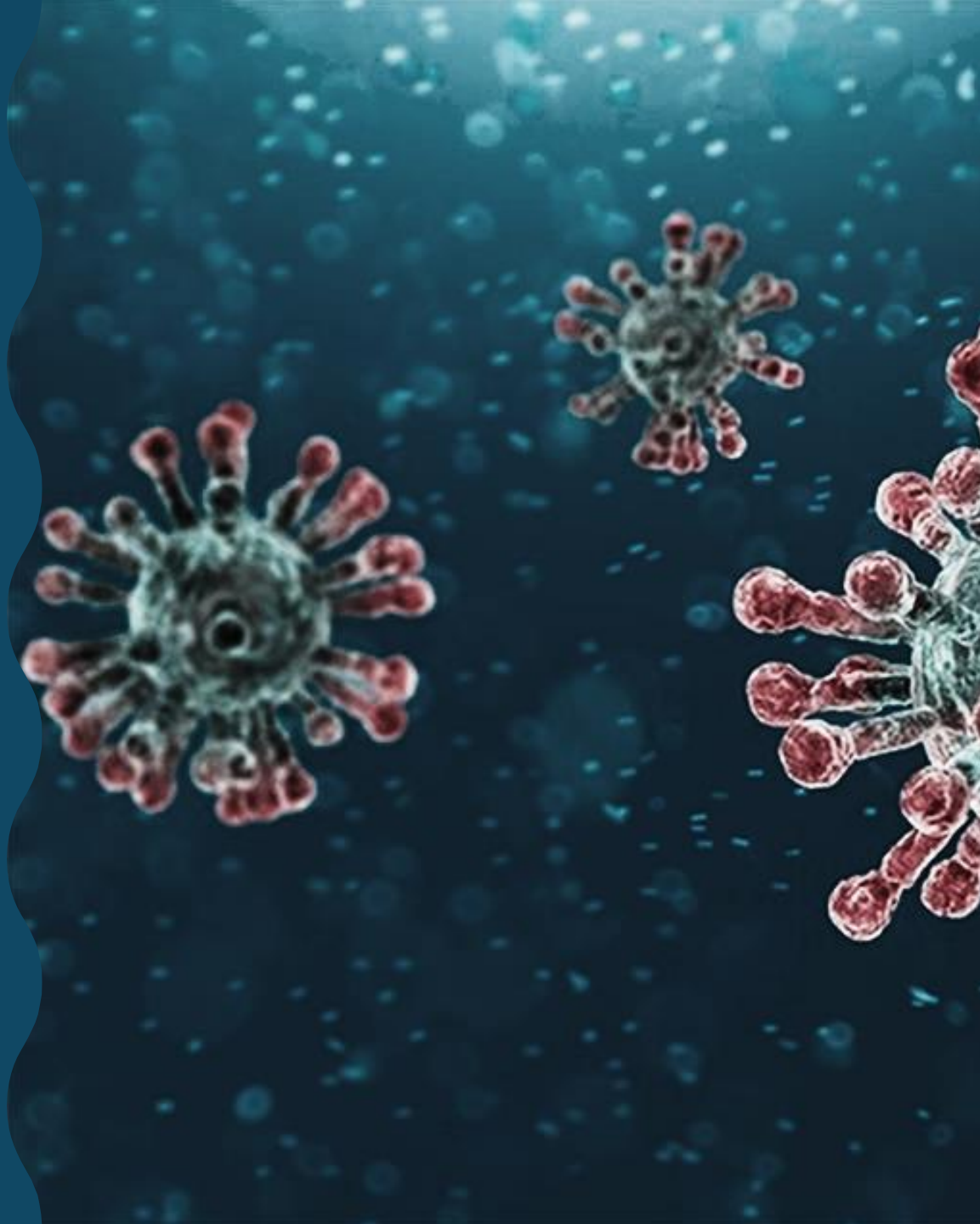
LIFE FOR ME WENT ON AS IT NORMALLY DID. I HUNG OUT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY, ALMOST ON A DAILY BASIS. GOING SHOPPING, TO THE MOVIES, BOWLING, TO SCHOOL.

THEN THE FIRST FEW CASES HIT THE UK. I WAS SAT IN PRIVATE STUDY WITH MY FRIENDS WHEN THE NEWS REPORT CAME UP ON OUR COMPUTERS. WE THOUGHT NOTHING OF IT AND CONTINUED WITH OUR DAY.

THEN MERELY A FEW WEEKS LATER MY SCHOOL HAD TO SHUT DUE TO A CASE IN ONE OF THE LOWER YEAR GROUPS. MY SCHOOL WAS SHUT FOR 3 DAYS WHILE THEY HAD THE SCHOOL PROFESSIONALLY SANITISED AND CLEANED.

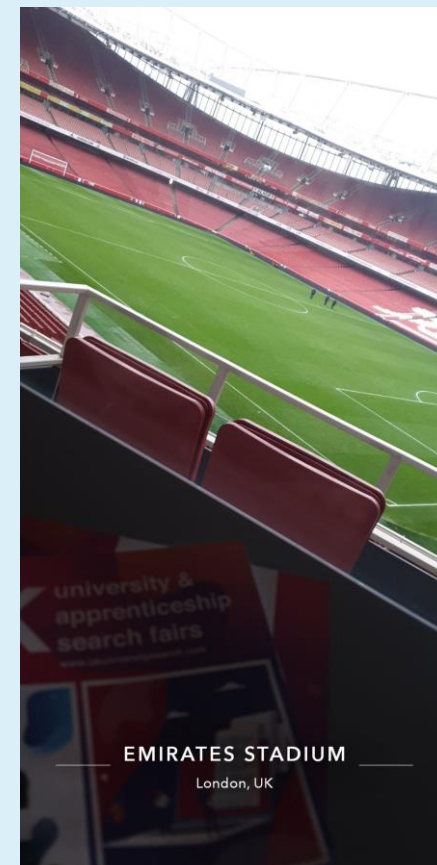
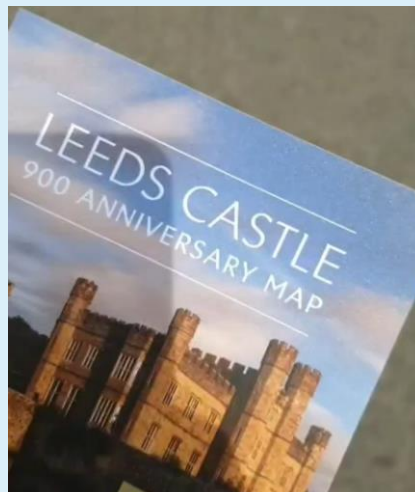
THAT'S WHEN THINGS STARTED TO FEEL AS THOUGH EVERYTHING WASN'T GOING TO BE JUST LIKE IT USUALLY WAS. THIS VIRUS WAS MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE OTHER VIRUSES THAT COME AND GO EACH YEAR.

THEN ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020 BORIS JOHNSON (UK'S PRIME MINISTER) ANNOUNCED THE CLOSING OF SCHOOLS. ON THE 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH THE OFFICIAL UK FIRST LOCKDOWN WAS ANNOUNCED.





# LIFE BEFORE LOCKDOWN – IN COLOUR



Before the pandemic I loved leaving the house and visiting places around the south of England. I'd go out on day trips with my family and I hung out with my friends fairly often, going to parks, shopping and to the cinema.

ONCE IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT SCHOOLS WOULD BE CLOSING, A FEELING OF OVERWHELMING ANXIETY FILLED ME UP. I WAS WORRIED ABOUT NOT SEEING MY FRIENDS, MY FAMILY, THEIR HEALTH AND SAFETY, WHAT WAS GOING TO BECOME OF OUR EDUCATION.

WE WERE TOLD IT WOULD ALL BE OVER IN A FEW WEEKS AND THAT WE WOULD BE BACK FOR THE SUMMER TERMS. WE ALMOST KNEW THIS WASN'T TRUE, BUT WE KEPT HOPE WE WOULD ALL SEE EACH OTHER SOON.

SO WE SAID GOODBYE AND PARTED WAYS FOR WHAT WE HOPED WOULD ONLY BE A FEW WEEKS.



HUGGING THE FEW OF MY FRIENDS WHO WERE STILL IN SCHOOL AS WE LEFT THE GATES AT THE END OF THE DAY, NOT HAVING THE CHANCE TO PROPERLY SAY GOODBYE TO THOSE FRIENDS WHO WERE ALREADY IN ISOLATION DUE TO MEDICAL CONDITIONS. IF I HAD KNOWN I WOULDN'T SEE THEM TILL SEPTEMBER I WOULD OF HUGGED THEM TIGHTER AS I ENDED UP MISSING THEM SO MUCH.

I BARELY HAD A CHANCE TO SAY GOODBYE TO TWO OF MY FAVORITE TEACHERS, ONE OF WHICH HAD TAUGHT ME SINCE YEAR 8 (WHEN I WAS 12/13). HAVING TO BRING IN LEAVERS PRESENTS FOR THEM WHEN I HAD TO GIVE BACK TEXTBOOKS IN JULY.



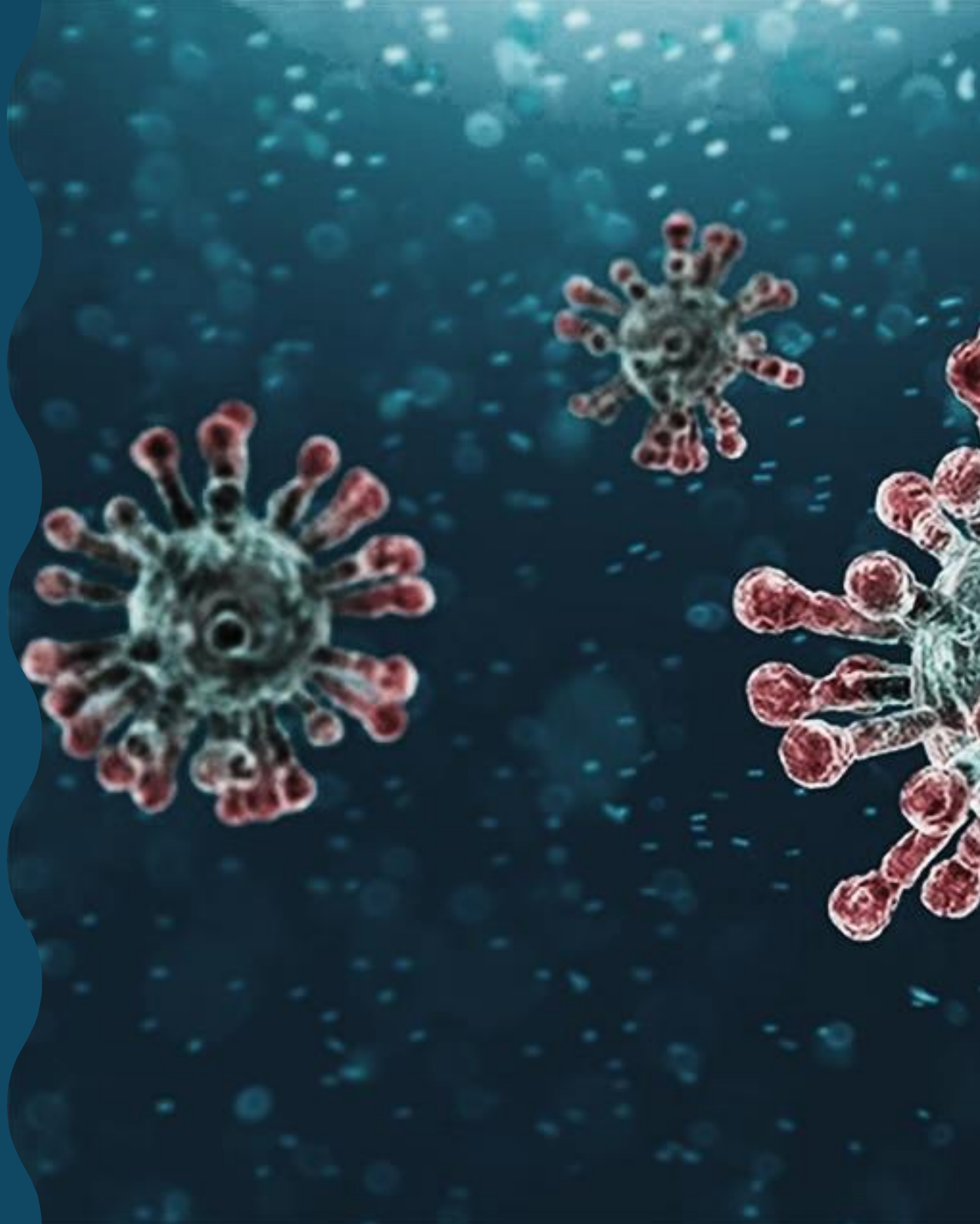


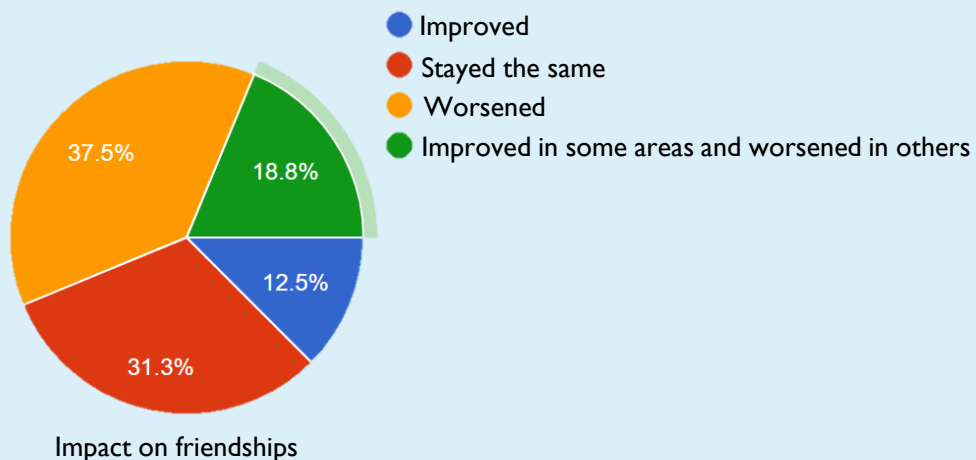
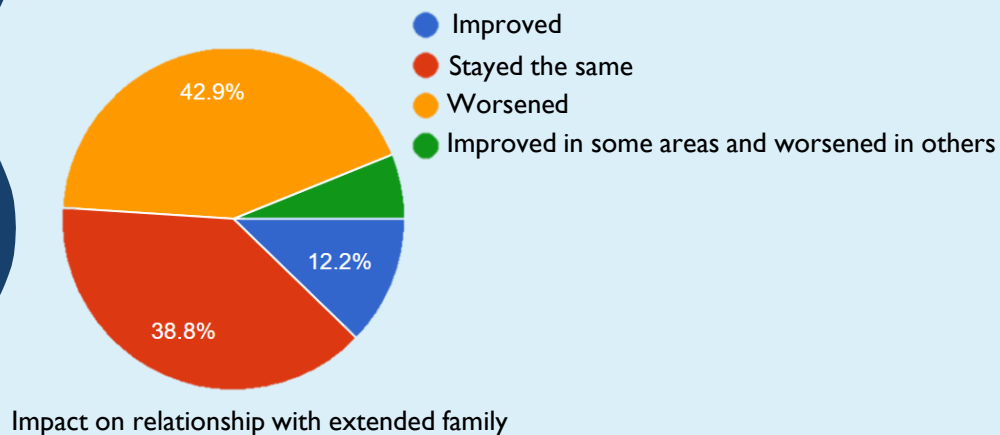
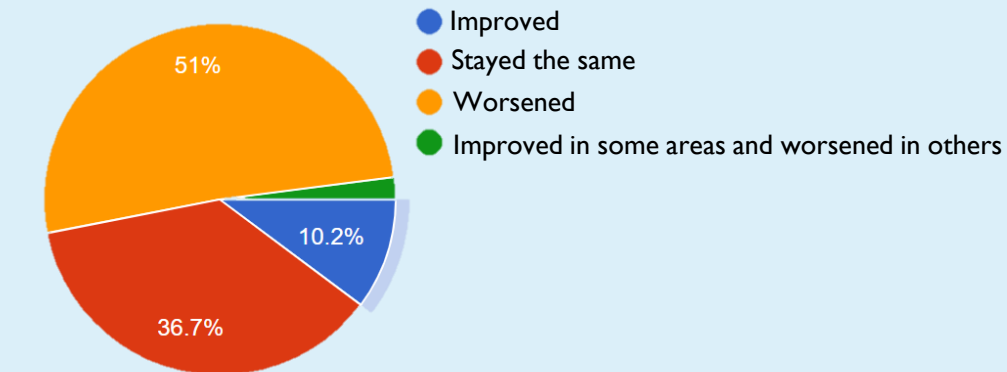
# LOCKDOWN I

## IMPACT ON MY LIFE

At the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown in the UK I had begun to lose motivation to do my school work, to go outside, go on walks, talk to my friends, or do the activities I previously enjoyed. My mental health reached a low it hadn't done in years, I felt so isolated and alone, prepared to give up on everything. I felt that I couldn't reach out to anyone and that no one would understand how I felt. I was unable to receive a useful amount of support from my therapists, unable to speak to my doctor about my medical conditions and was able to receive comfort from those who I would usually confide in.

As the lockdown developed I started to adjust to the new way of life, the wearing of masks, which now I hope will continue when people are sick as to prevent the spread to others., and adjusted to the new 'normal' caused by the pandemic.





## Education

8% of those who took part in my questionnaire received no work from their school. (Some due to being a summer 2020 leaver and others due to lack of school communication or lack of availability to technology to complete their work.)

92% of those who completed my questionnaire had received work from the school through varied methods of distribution.

72% of young people received work through emails from the school.

12% received work through the post.

8% of young people received work through an online website such as a homework website.

20% of the young people who were receiving work from the school received no online method of lessons such as video calls, recorded video lessons or phone call lessons. (Other 8% were the students who weren't given work at all)

72% of young people received online lessons through video calls, recorded video lessons or phone call lessons.

8% received online lessons through pre-recorded lessons,

28% received online lessons through phone calls,

64% received video call lessons.

## Mental health

36% of young people responded to the questionnaire saying that their mental health had declined since the lockdown was implemented.

44% of young people responded to the questionnaire saying that their mental health had stayed the same as it was before the lockdown was implemented.

4% of young people responded to the questionnaire saying that their mental health had improved since the lockdown was implemented.

16% of young people responded to the questionnaire saying that their mental health had declined in some areas but had improved in others/had its ups and downs since the lockdown was implemented.

4% of young people recorded 0 on the mental health scale.

4% of young people recorded 1 on the mental health scale.

12% of young people recorded 2 on the mental health scale.

4% of young people recorded 3 on the mental health scale.

24% of young people recorded 4 on the mental health scale.

28% of young people recorded 5 on the mental health scale.

4% of young people recorded 6 on the mental health scale.

8% of young people recorded 7 on the mental health scale.

8% of young people recorded 8 on the mental health scale.

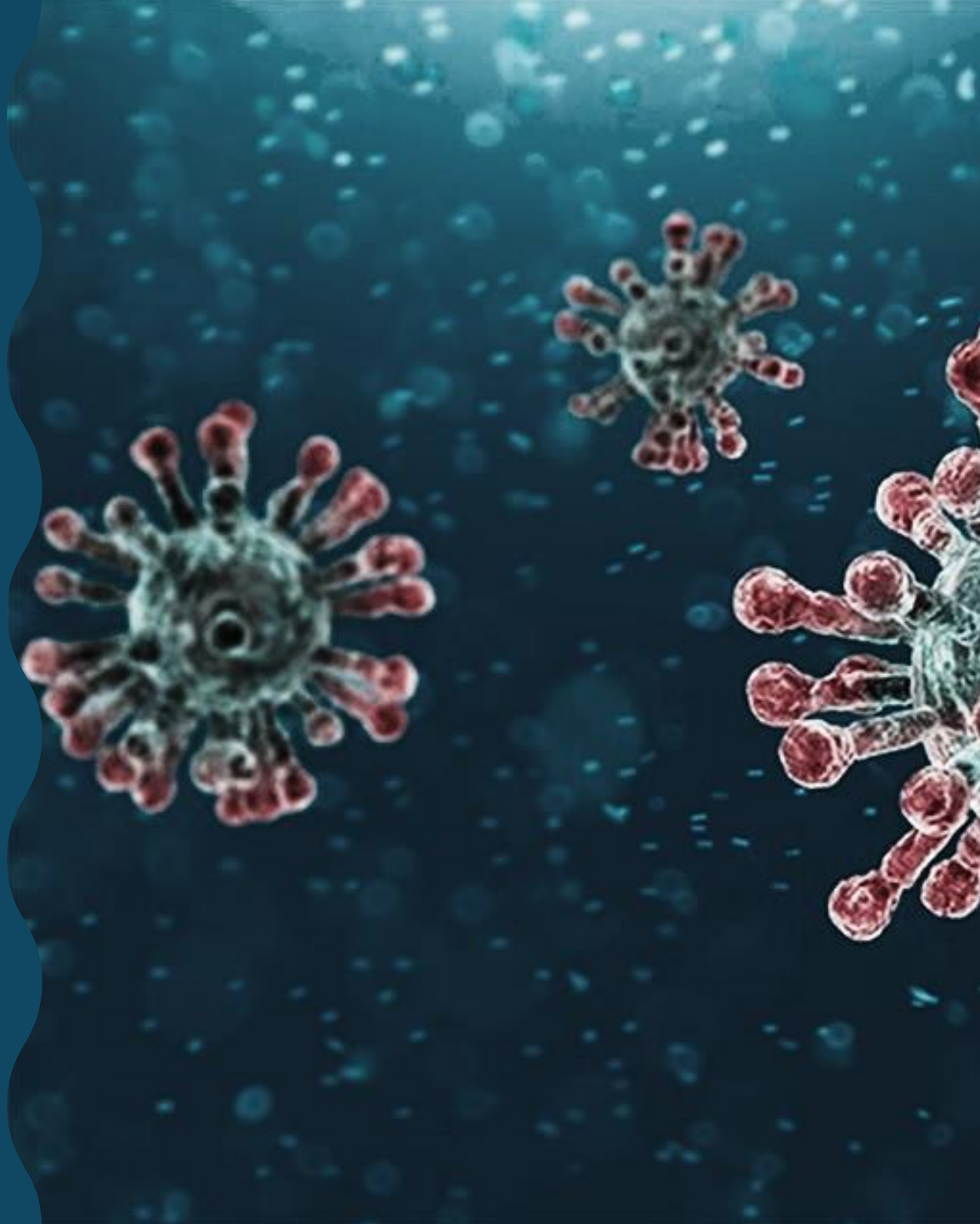
0% of young people recorded 9 on the mental health scale.

4% of young people recorded 10 on the mental health scale

# THE END OF LOCKDOWN I

I returned to school at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown a different person with a different outlook on life. Much like my life before the pandemic I was further pushed to mature faster than I should have whilst in lockdown. It benefitted me for the better though and I have an even deeper understanding of difficulties faced around the world as it gave me time to put everything into perspective and fight for what I believed was right with people across the globe and for that, lockdown made me a better person despite how difficult it was.

I pushed myself to do things I would have been too anxious to do previously. Even though it's exceedingly cringe I did start to believe the idea of you only live once, so I thought I might as well enjoy it. This pandemic has shown us how fragile and unpredictable life is and from now on I aim to live it the best way I can for those who were taken from us too early.

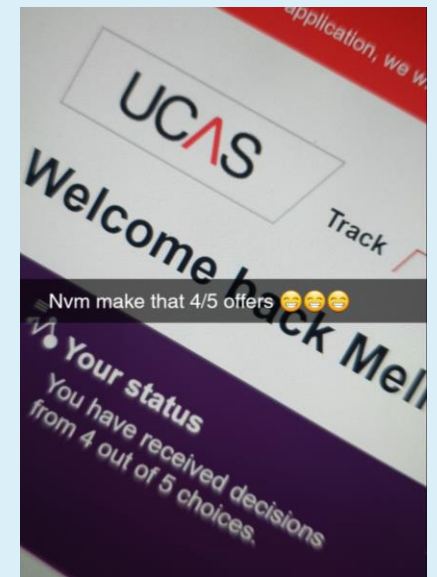
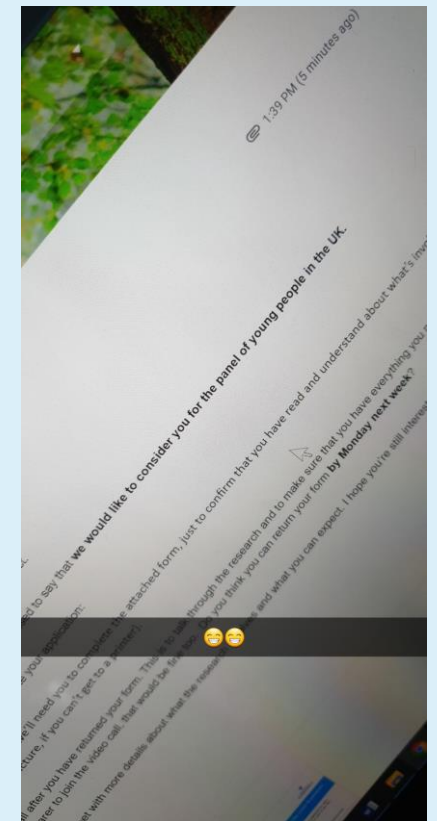
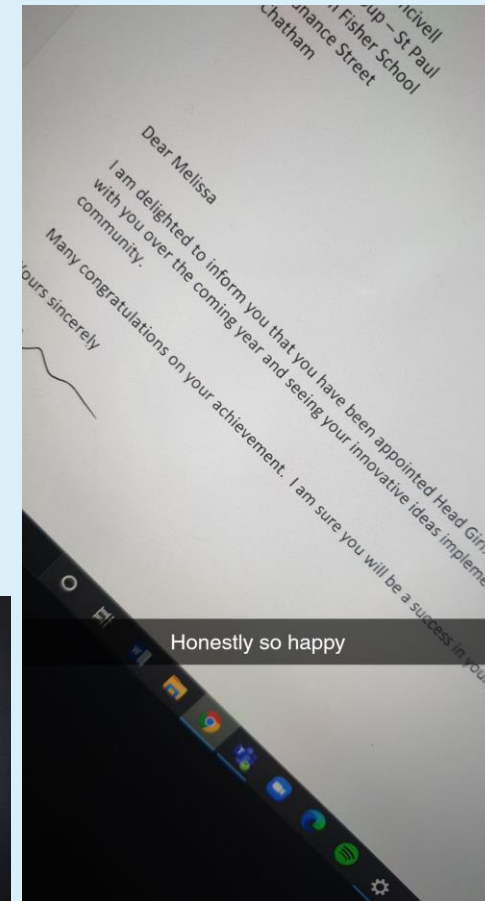




The lockdown gave me time to reflect upon myself and all the things that had previously been holding me back. It allowed me to return to school after the lockdown a more confident person and I became head girl of the school, speaking to several primary schools and taking part in several meetings on how to improve the school. Establishing a mentoring system for younger students which has already begun to have a positive effect on younger students education and lives.

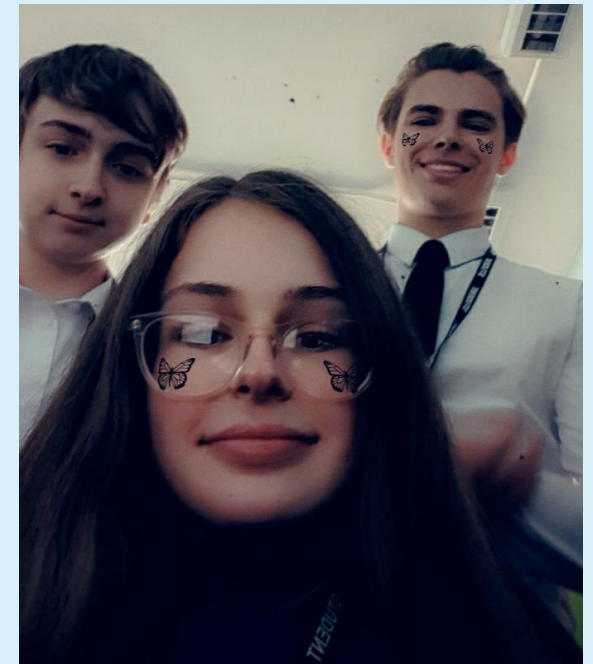
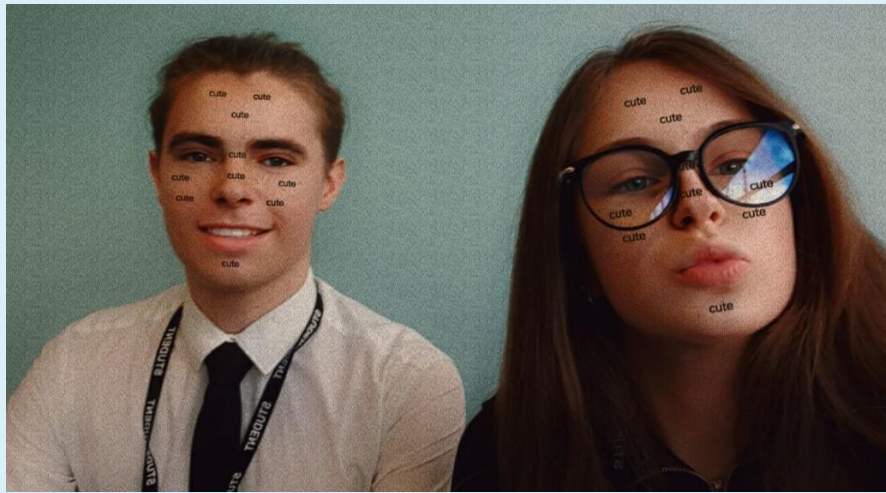
I received end of year awards for all 3 of my subjects at the end of year 12 and at the end of year 13 for my dedication and commitment to the school and my education.

I also received offers from all 5 universities that I applied for and will hopefully be attending my dream university in September 2021!



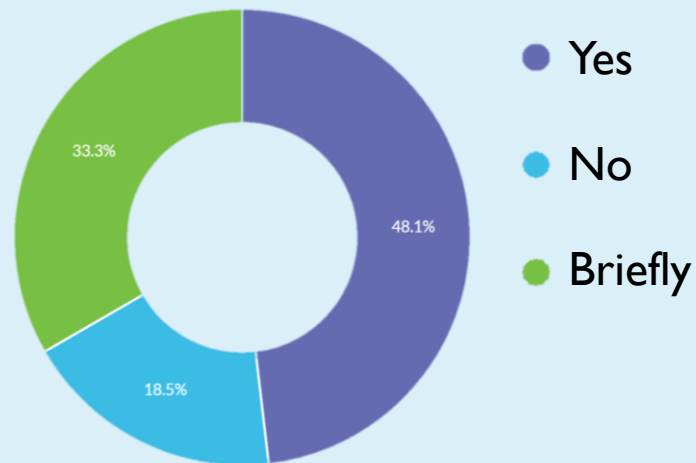


# THE RETURN TO SCHOOL



The return to school in September 2020 was the happiest I had felt since the beginning of lockdown. Being able to see my friends in person was so nice. We hugged for the first time in months and I realised just how much I had missed them. Despite distancing myself from some of them we were still really close when we returned.

There were very few things that were different from pre lockdown school, we could wear masks if we wanted but it wasn't mandatory. We didn't have to social distance. We were advised to sanitise when we entered and left a classroom. But nothing else changed. Life was seemingly going to continue as it had before.



Managed to see friends and family after the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown was lifted

14.8% of young people believed that their mental health had been negatively impacted after the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown

37% believed that their mental health had stayed the same

7.4% believed that their mental health had been positively impacted since the lifting of the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown.

40.7% believed that their mental health had been negatively impacted in some areas but positively impacted in other areas after the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown.

11.1% of young people believed that relationship with family members had worsened after 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown was lifted

37% believed that their relationships had stayed the same

33.3% believed that their relationships had improved after the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown was lifted

18.5% believed that their relationships had improved in some areas but had worsened in other areas after the lifting of the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown.

11.1% believed that their friendships worsened after the lifting of the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown

29.6% believed that their friendships stayed the same after the lifting of the first lockdown

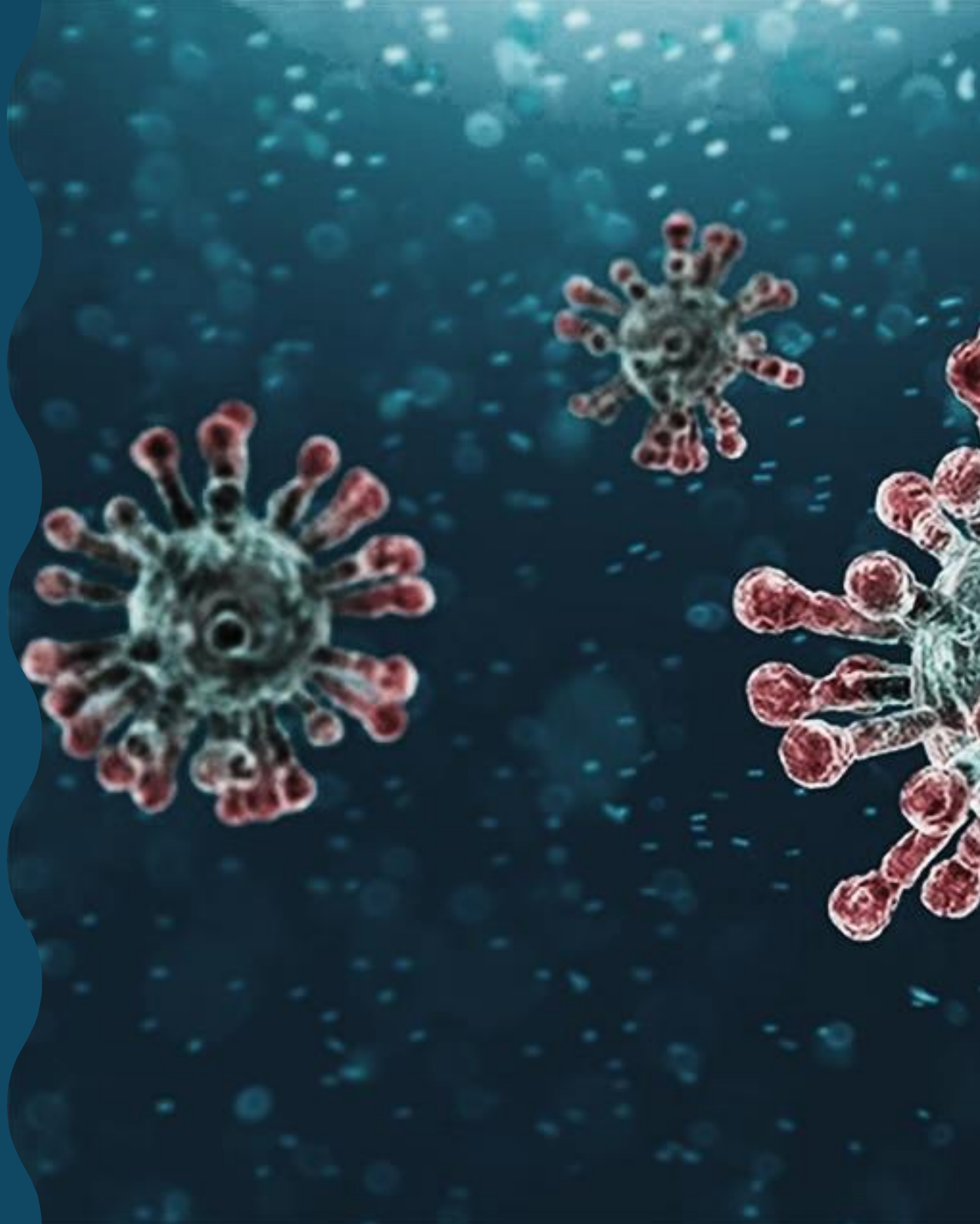
18.5% believed that their friendships had improved  
40.7% believed that their friendships had improved in some areas but had worsened in others since the lifting of the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown.



## LOCKDOWN 2

Not all young people in the UK were affected by the 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown, this is due to the different regulations put in place by the different devolved powers in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and in England, and different areas within England having been given different levels of restrictions.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown was established through the tier system, that depending on which tier you were in changed which restrictions were in place. The moment Boris announced a 4<sup>th</sup> tier in the system the area I lived in was placed into it, as our covid rates were very high, I still had to go to school but was unable to do anything else other than a weekly food shop. While my friends in other areas of the country were out meeting friends and family.

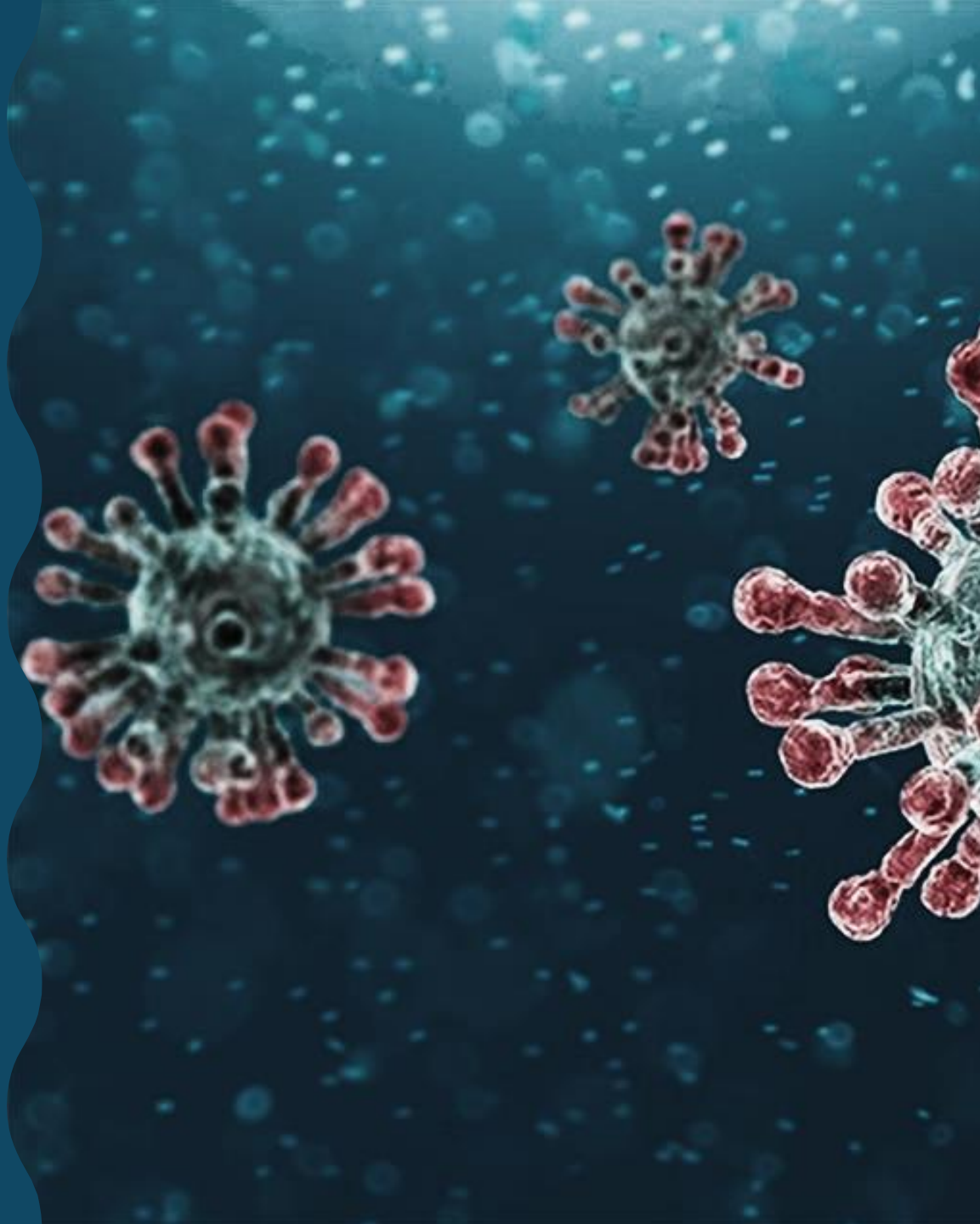


## LOCKDOWN 3 – DECEMBER 2020

When lockdown 3 was announced I was on my way home from being at a friends house as my area had been moved from tier 4 into tier 2 so I was able to hang out with my friends. I had made plans for the holidays and was looking forward to spending Christmas with my Nana and Gramps as we do every year.

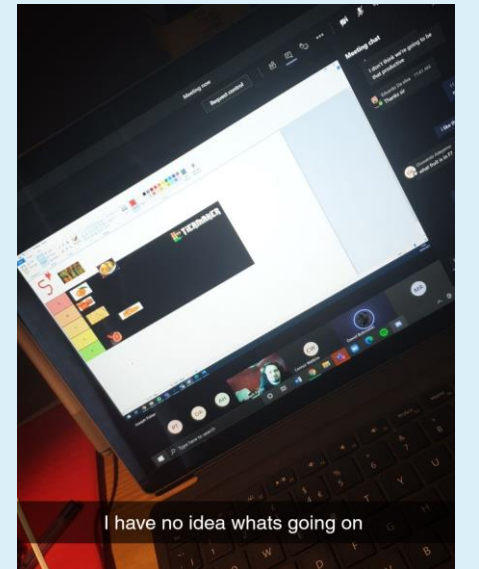
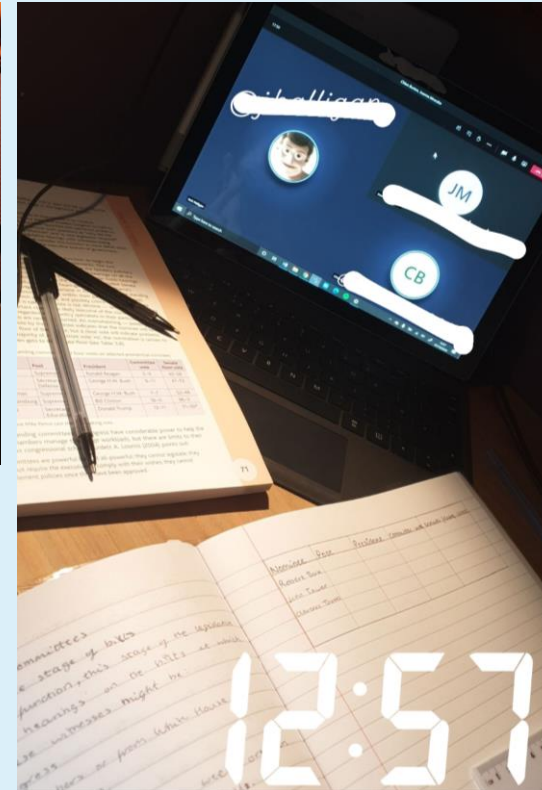
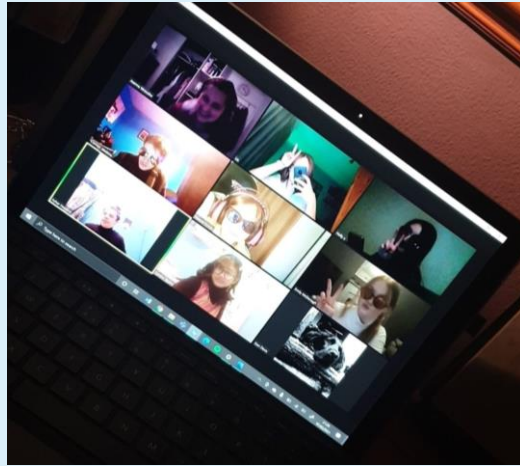
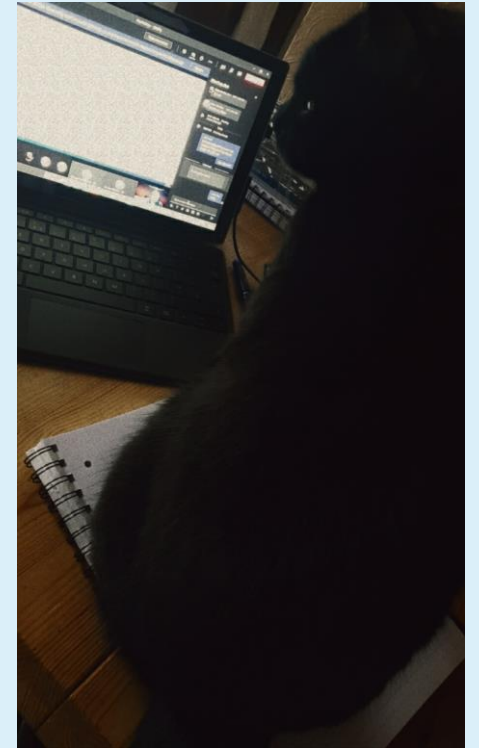
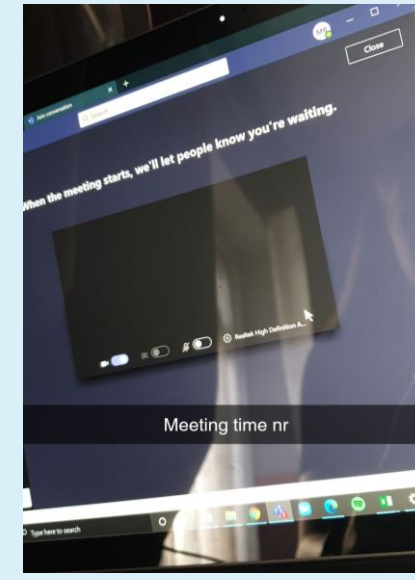
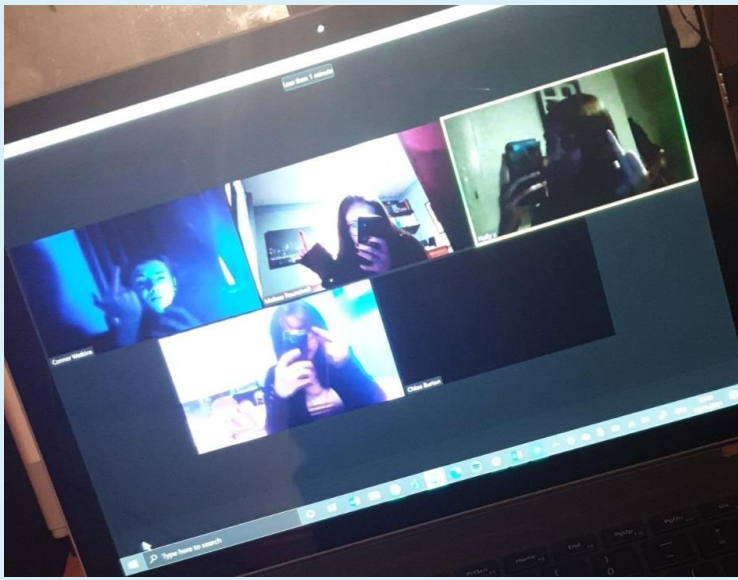
However this was ruined when Boris announced the UK was going back into lockdown. I was heart broken and left with so many emotions I ended up having several breakdowns and not having my regular supports system of my friends to turn to for support.

I understood why it had to be done as the country wasn't taking the pandemic seriously enough after the first lockdown and thus cases were rising and the vaccine wasn't ready for distribution yet. But it was still a very stressful time after just having got back into the routine of being in school, to then spend 2 more months learning from home and not updates from the government on what was going to happen with my exams in the summer of 2021.





# MOCKS AND ONLINE LESSONS

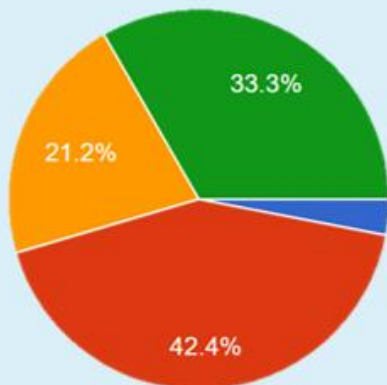


My friends and I turned to video calls and Netflix party almost every night to see each other. We stayed up late and talked about everything and anything. It brought us all comfort and brought many of us closer.

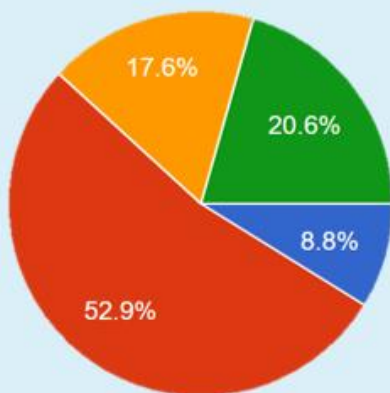
Online lessons had become more regular in the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown. I had several a week in the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown compared to the one lesson I had during the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown

My school made up complete mocks in which we did all of our exam papers for all of our subjects. It was difficult

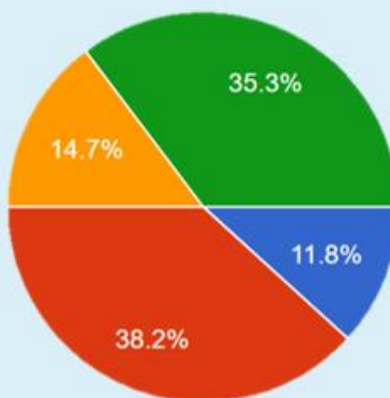




Impact on relationship with immediate family



Impact on relationship with extended family



Impact on friendships

- Improved
- Stayed the same
- Worsened
- Improved in some areas and worsened in others

- Improved
- Stayed the same
- Worsened
- Improved in some areas and worsened in others

- Improved
- Stayed the same
- Worsened
- Improved in some areas and worsened in others

56.2% of young people felt the need to reach out for support during the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown

43.8% of young people felt that they didn't need to reach out for support during the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown

Out of all of the young people that participated in the questionnaire, they were asked to rate their mental health during the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown on a scale of 0-10 with 0 being that their mental health had declined, 5 remaining the same and 10 as improving:

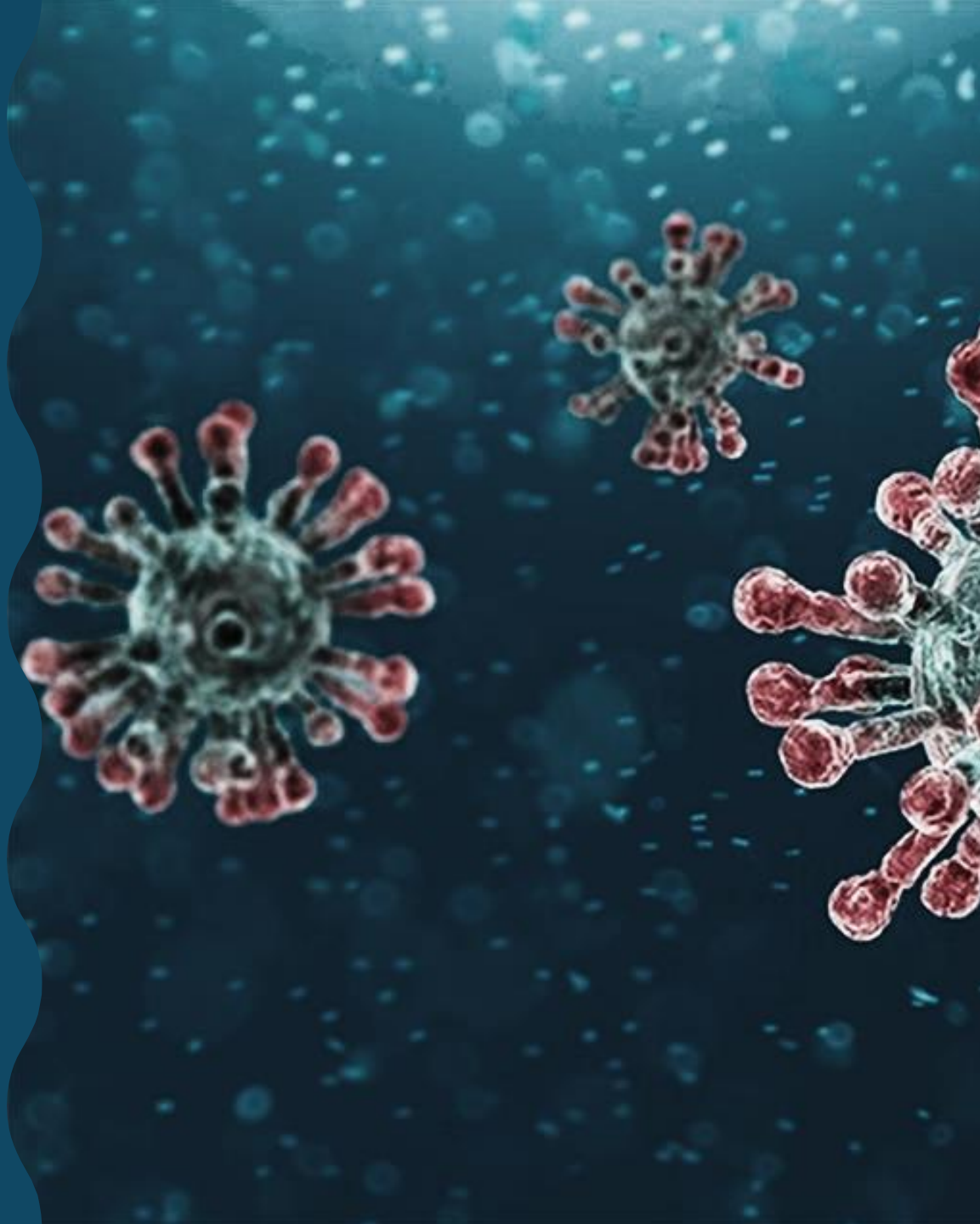
- 0% gave a score of 0
- 0% gave a score of 1
- 8.6% gave a score of 2
- 5.7% gave a score of 3
- 5.7% gave a score of 4
- 38% gave a score of 5
- 14.3% gave a score of 6
- 18.1% gave a score of 7
- 5.7% gave a score of 8
- 2.9% gave a score of 9
- 1% gave a score of 10

## THE END OF LOCKDOWN 3

The end of lockdown 3 made me determined to spend as much time with my friends and family as possible after having the summer of 2020 ripped away from us and having spent so much time apart.

We knew that the move out of lockdown would be slow, so when Boris announced the "road map", it came as no surprise to my family or friends. We've all stuck to the regulations and as they are lifted we are planning more events and parties as many of us had birthdays during the several lockdowns.

The government had cancelled GCSEs and A-levels for the summer of 2021 and had set out how grading was going to occur. Things began to seem less stressful and I began to relax and enjoy my final year at school. However, the return to school wasn't smooth sailing and I ended up more stressed in school than I did before the end of lockdown 3.

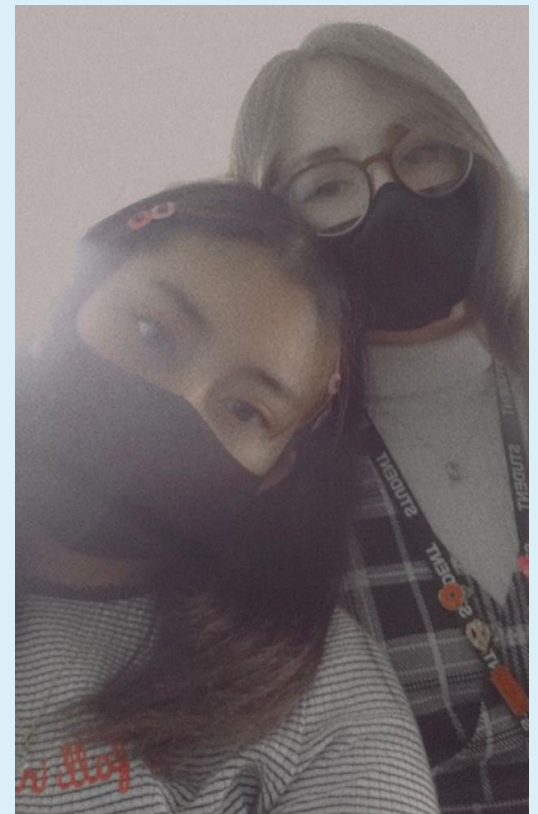


The return to school in February after the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown was very different to the return to school after the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown for me personally. My school had become very strict on Covid regulations. Our private study rooms were reduced to 10 people per room, the different year groups entered and exited the building from different areas, masks were to be worn at all times and those exempt had to wear a face shield, we had to sanitise our hands when we entered and left a room and had to be covid tested twice a week at home.

Before we could return we all received an email with a time and class location to have a covid test to be allowed in on the first day back. Many of my classmates and teachers received positive tests between February and April and thus many of my lessons still took place on zoom despite being in school. All of my lessons took place in the sixth form area (top floor of the school) and thus I never went anywhere around the school and felt quite isolated but understood it was to keep us all safe. From April onwards I haven't done any more learning of the subjects I was taking for my A-levels instead did several exams during the lessons as the government requested that no further learning would take place and that exams were cancelled. For me they weren't, instead of 8 final

exams that I would have been doing across a 4 week period, I did over 50 mini tests between April and the 17<sup>th</sup> of May and 6 final exams in 2 weeks before my last day which I was asked to create the goodbye assembly for my year.

This created even more stress and issues with my mental health. My school refused to use the papers the government released whilst other schools in my area used them. Creating further issues in government covid protocol.





91.4% of young people received support during the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown

1.9% of young people were unaware or didn't know that support was available

6.7% of young people didn't receive support during the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown

Out of the 91.4% who had received support from their school they were asked to rate how satisfied they were with the support they received on a scale of 0-10 with 0 being very unsatisfied and 10 being very satisfied:

0% gave a score of 0

0% gave a score of 1

2.9% gave a score of 2

12.3% gave a score of 3

9.5% gave a score of 4

15.2% gave a score of 5

21% gave a score of 6

21% gave a score of 7

18.1% gave a score of 8

0% gave a score of 9

0% gave a score of 10

58.1% of young people believed that they managed to stay on top of their work load during the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown.

24.8% of young people believed that they managed to somewhat stay on top of their school work

17.1% of young people believed that they were unable to manage their work load

Out of all of the young people who took part in the survey, they were asked to rate how satisfied they were with the work they had been provided with during the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown. On a scale of 0-10 with 0 being very unsatisfied and 10 being very satisfied:

0% gave a score of 0

2.9% gave a score of 1

2.9% gave a score of 2

12.4% gave a score of 3

9.5% gave a score of 4

15.2% gave a score of 5

18% gave a score of 6

21% gave a score of 7

15.2% gave a score of 8

2.9% gave a score of 9

0% gave a score of 10

## A YEAR AFTER THE FIRST LOCKDOWN

Currently in June of 2021, I am a completely different person to who I was in March 2020, this may be due to the pandemic and the several lockdowns forcing me to reflect on myself and what had been holding me back, being separated from the negative people in my life or just due to getting older and becoming a legal adult and changing as I grow up.

But I can know for certain that the pandemic has changed my outlook on life, the things I used to take for granted such as the ability to hug my friends and family, hold their hand, or even the ability to sit in the same room as them I won't take for granted any more and shall cherish every moment as we don't know what the future has in store. I've realised I can't spend my life dwelling on what could have been or what could be, but should rather live in the moment and enjoy and experience things as they happen, understanding I can't change what has happened but I can change how it affects me and what can be changed in the future, to ensure a happier, healthier world and planet for all. The pandemic allowed for me to connect with people across the globe and fight for what we believe in, and I aim to continue to do so in the future and in my life after the pandemic.

