

Dear Parent, Guardian

**Re: Photography A level course 2020 -2021/2**

We are writing because your son or daughter has opted to take A-level photography starting in September. The purpose of the letter is to explain our view of the best equipment to help our students succeed in this subject.

Students should have regular access to:

- 1) A reasonably up to date DSLR (Digital single lens reflex camera). This allows them to use manual and other functions easily reaching a higher level of learning. We have a very limited number of these cameras which can be loaned for very short periods only.
- 2) A USB memory stick.
- 3) **An SD memory Card.** If a DSLR is not available in September – this card is essential to allow students to access school cameras
- 4) A SD Memory card reader.

(Please see the detailed information below to help you make choices)

We understand that this is a considerable expense and your support is very valuable for our students, but we do want to reassure you that we will support your son and daughter whatever their level of equipment.

Yours sincerely,

William Pym

(Teacher of Art and Photography)

**DETAILED INFORMATION and SUGGESTIONS**

The following equipment would be ideal for a student starting in photography, but please note other brands and models will be equally useful:

- 1) **A Nikon D3500 typical prices £380 - £450 with standard 18-55mm lens. (strap, lens cap, small camera bag are all important too) These are compatible with school cameras.**

[https://www.nikon.co.uk/en\\_GB/product/digital-cameras/slr/consumer/d3500](https://www.nikon.co.uk/en_GB/product/digital-cameras/slr/consumer/d3500)

Or earlier models in this series are available second hand and very good value: for example: A Nikon 3200/3300/3400 – (They are now discontinued as new) - these are very commonly available 2<sup>nd</sup> hand – They are very similar to the brand new ones and could be as little as £160 – but check that the deal includes a lens etc. and that the condition is good.

**(Good fixed lens 'Bridge cameras' (£120 plus) and are also useful, but they are much harder to use for manual photography. As a minimum, the camera must allow the student to manually change ISO, aperture and shutter speed)**

- 2) **A standard USB memory stick – ideally 16GB** (which would carry about 3 month's work, smaller sizes are useful too) – the purpose is to allow students to move digital files between school and home, especially useful if a student has access to image software on a home computer.
- 3) **A Standard camera SD memory card** - This is the card that goes in the camera. Typical costs - £10-£60 (For example Sandisk 16/32 or 64 GB) - Camera kits normally have them as standard. **A personal SD card is vital if the student is intending to use school cameras at the start of the course, even for a short time.**  
<https://shop.westerndigital.com/en-gb/products/memory-cards/sandisk-extreme-uhs-i-sd#SDSDXNE-016G-GNCIN>
- 4) **A SD memory card reader – typical costs £7.50 plus** - Recognised brands are best, as some cheap imports fail – best purchased from Curry's/Dixons, etc. This allows digital files to be transferred from camera to school computer for editing .(Note: a cable comes as standard with a camera kit.) Again, this becomes vital if a student is using school cameras.

**Additional items for supporting learning that may also be useful:**

(Photography is a very expensive activity so the following are wonderful but these items are NOT ESSENTIAL.)

- **Mobile smartphone** – these have excellent digital cameras and can be very useful for supporting learning, students must be able to download photos and bring them into school on a memory stick.
- **Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom.** - Only if a student has access to a home computer, these two image handling software programmes are very useful as they are the ones that they will be using in school. They can be licenced and downloaded as a photography package for a monthly rental from Adobe -  
<https://www.adobe.com/uk/creativecloud/photography/compare-plans.html?promoid=L3XTXL8&mv=other> The offers vary from £8 to £19 a month
- **Tripod and flash gun**
- **Film Camera** – we teach basic analogue, traditional film photography, and students can use our fully equipped darkroom. If you have access to a traditional camera, the student can use this, which is very useful.

If you want any advice about purchasing new equipment – please do contact the art department: 01434-610336 or email Mr Pym on : wpym@qehs.net.