



5 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

EXAM UPDATE

The Prime Minister announced yesterday evening that GCSE and A Level exams will not take place this summer in the normal way. In the coming days I hope we will get details of what will replace them. It is likely that a system similar to last year's will be established, where students' class and homework, coursework, assessments, mock exam results and other evidence will be used to award grades. However, we cannot be sure of this and I will keep you informed with any detail as we receive it. As far as we know, vocational (BTEC exams etc) will still be going ahead over the next couple of weeks and we will write to you about this separately.

I am aware of the shock and disappointment this news will surely have brought, as indeed it did to us last night. The government had consistently told students, parents and schools that exams would happen this year no matter what, and we have all been working towards this. I have emailed students this morning to express my concern and disappointment for them but also to encourage them and reassure them that there is still everything to play for. By this I mean:

1. Students hard work will be recognised. None of the effort they have put in, and will continue to put in, will be wasted.
2. We will do everything we can as a school to ensure that the system used will be fair and will enable hard work, effort and achievement to be recognised.
3. Students' results (when they are awarded in the summer) will be indistinguishable from results achieved by having sat exams, as last year's cohort bears testimony. Grades awarded will still enable students to progress to sixth form and universities etc in the normal way. The value of these grades is not being diminished (no matter how the press may interpret the situation), only the way in which they are being administered. None of the students' ambitions for the future will be affected.

I hope that, as this news is processed, the disappointment and shock will ease and students will be able to see that it will all be fine. Teachers and school staff are here to support students in all respects and I have urged students to do two things; to continue to engage in their learning and to keep talking to us about how they feel and how we might realistically be able to support them. The routine of attending remote lessons will be really important for students during this next lockdown and learning is so important to them, their well-being and their futures.

I will be in touch again with more information as I receive it. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or if we can do anything to support your child.

Best wishes

Jen Veal
Executive Head teacher