

23 March 2020

Dear Parent or Carer,

**Re: Latest information regarding the awarding of qualification grades to Year 11 students**

On Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> March the Department for Education (DfE) released the latest information and guidance on how qualification grades will be awarded to the year 11 students whose exams have been cancelled this summer due to the Coronavirus pandemic. I am writing to summarise this information and to let you know the position we are in as a school and how we will be supporting your child.

We have received the following information from the DfE:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

Firstly, the DfE aims to ensure that grades are awarded fairly and that no student is disadvantaged by the disruption. The exam boards will be asking teachers to submit grades for qualifications based on how, in their professional judgement, they would have expected the students to achieve in the summer examinations. This will take into account a range of evidence, including performance in PPEs and non-exam assessments. At this time we are waiting for further guidance on how to do this however the DfE have stated that we will do this 'fairly and robustly'. I have asked that students **keep all schoolwork in a safe place** as it may be called as evidence.

This information will be submitted to the exam boards and they will then combine this information with other relevant data, including KS2 prior attainment data and use this to 'produce a calculated grade for each student, which will be a best assessment of the work they have put in'. Importantly, the DfE has stated that these grades will be indistinguishable from grades awarded in previous years.

I am aware that this methodology may cause anxiety for our students, some of whom are concerned that their PPE results or in-class assessments do not reflect what they are capable of and they are anxious to prove their ability in standardised tests. They may feel that the calculated grade does not reflect their performance. The DfE has said that there will be an opportunity for students to appeal the process of this decision and they will provide further guidance on how that will be done in due course. The DfE has said that there will be an opportunity for any student to sit an exam at the earliest opportunity, once schools reopen again. They will also have the option to sit their examinations in summer 2021.

**What does this mean for my child?**

At the moment we would like all year 11 students to continue working on their qualifications, including any BTEC coursework which has not yet been submitted and will be required for moderation. In the event that they are content to accept the qualifications awarded to them by the process outlined above, they can cease working when they know these grades. The exam boards are aiming to provide these grades to students before the end of July. However, a situation could arise whereby a student wishes to sit an exam later in the year, and in this case it is in their best

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interests to continue with their studies. If they have a break now it is unlikely that they will perform well in a subsequent exam. As a result, our staff will continue to support and give feedback to those students who submit work. It is impractical for teachers to chase students for work and so the responsibility is with the student to complete and submit work.

As always, I would like to reassure you that we will do our best to support you and your child through this difficult and uncertain time. As information become available I will share it with you, and if you have further questions I will try my best to answer them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Chapman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Chapman  
Senior Assistant Principal

Further information from the DfE can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced>