



Montgomery Academy

An Academy within the Fylde Coast Academy Trust

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Inspiring Excellence Together

15th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer/Year 11 Student,

I am writing today as I am concerned that some students in Year 11 are reading the situation regarding the cancelling of this summer's exams wrongly. This is why on this rare occasion I address the students directly and I ask **parents/carers to go through this letter with their son or daughter**. Year 11 students are 15 or 16 years old, so should be mature enough to understand what I am about to say and will also know whether it applies to them or not.

This year is very different to last year. Last March when Year 11s went home for what turned out to be the last time, they knew within 24 hours that their exams were cancelled. Students, and to some extent, schools did not know how the final grades were going to be awarded. The DfE and OFQUAL then went on to make a real mess of the grading system ending with a major U-turn in August. I am sure that they are not going to make the same mistakes again.

Letters have been published this week between the government and OFQUAL, who oversee all exams in England. They have made suggestions as to how student grades are going to be worked out this year. They will take 2-4 weeks to make final decisions, but what they are suggesting is:

- Exam boards will provide exam style questions to schools to help teacher assessment and these may be parts of the original papers that students would have been set in the summer exam period
- All students may be made to sit these papers when they are back in school again or they may make it optional for schools as part of evidence gathering for teacher assessments
- Teacher assessment will be as late as possible, so students will be working through the summer term
- Teacher assessment will be moderated by the department, the school and FCAT as well as other external bodies
- Students will need to be assessed on what they have been taught, so this is likely to include work set during lockdown

What I am getting at is **DON'T STOP WORKING!**

If you are having problems accessing the work, logging in, uploading work, getting on the internet at home or access to an internet device then let us know. We will help as much as we can, but **DON'T STOP WORKING!** (25 hours a week like a normal school week)

We do have evidence via the mock exams and I am really glad now that we persevered and got these done before Christmas. These give us a reflection of where we were up to at that point. I said to the year group on the first morning exam that this may be the only set of exams you do, yet there is no consolation in being proved right. The Cambridge National exams due in February have now also been cancelled, though I would like to thank all the students that came in to sit their Travel & Tourism, Construction and Sport Studies exams last week, which was almost all that had been entered.

What each student will need to do between now and July, is demonstrate that they have made progress from the mocks and continued to learn some new content in subjects. In some subjects, students did not sit the full set of papers as the work had not been covered yet. To some extent OFQUAL will have to reduce some of the content for each course due to the time lost, though students will need to have a good grasp of the fundamentals to be able to build on learning next year at college, the sixth form, in employment or on an apprenticeship.

Over the next few weeks Year 11 reports are going to be sent out with grades from the mocks or currently working at grades were the subject did not run a mock. Students need to understand that the grades on the reports are not minimum grades that we would submit for Centre Assessments in the summer but will form part of the evidence to decide that what the final Centre Assessed grade would be. For example, if a student achieved a Grade 5 in English in the mocks that does not guarantee that they will be given a Centre Assessed Grade of a 5 as students did not sit the complete full set of English papers as all work had not been covered by then. However, the mock grade will be an important piece of evidence in deciding the final grade along with potentially their work on the Exam board questions provided to schools that may be made compulsory.

The grades of the Year 11 report may indicate that students are doing well and others are not. The crucial thing is that all students need to keep working. We are going to be working on a template for a Year 11 reference that we will share in the next few weeks. This will make it clear what information we are going to provide to B&F College, Sixth Form or future employers at the end of the Year. It will be very evident, from the information given, what a student's engagement and progress has been from January to July.

To help us help support both students and parents in the engagement in the online work we are also going to be running a **Year 11 Parents' Evening remotely on Wednesday 27th January**. We have just purchased a piece of software that will allow parents to sign up for appointments with their child's teachers and also facilitate the appointment itself via a video or audio only link. We will contact you next week to outline how you can start making the appointments. We are currently planning to run appointments through the day, until 7pm. We will also be checking email addresses of parents as we are considering if it is possible to set up parent Google Classroom accounts, so parents can see their child's work.

In summary, please support the students to keep working remotely through Google Classroom, Seneca, Hegarty Maths and other platforms. If you need any help then let us know. One big advantage to the use of Looms is that work can be broken up during the day and students don't have to sit at a computer or other device for 5 hours straight through. There will be some students that need to be told to do less and are working too hard, though they are in a minority!

Please look out next week for the information regarding the Parents' Evening on Wednesday 27th January. We all hope to see the students back as soon as it is safe to do so. We are missing them.

Regards,



Mr. S. Careless
Headteacher