



NORHAM  
HIGH SCHOOL

Believe ~ Strive ~ Achieve

Dear Parents, Carers and Year 11 students,

Again, first and foremost, I hope this letter finds you and your families well. While there is no escaping the impact this awful virus has had on us all, I sincerely hope that it has not affected your family too greatly and your family has managed to remain safe, well or recover from any associated illness.

**Support for Year 11 now:**

As you all know, we have continued contacting every pupil, every week- just to see how you are and offer any help or support. This is most often completed by our amazing Year 11 Tutorial Team and SSA's. A small number of you receive calls from our exceptional pastoral team in place of these.

Mr Drennan has been working hard behind the scenes for you and is trying to carefully map where you all plan to go in September so we can support you with that transition and help you look forward to it as best we can. This includes our pledge to provide you with at least one course / text / revision book that will support you – I said we would cover that cost to help you and we will! You deserve this investment from us, it's an investment in you and your future.

For example, if you are planning on studying AS Level Psychology at 6<sup>th</sup> Form, we will buy that book for you where such books are available (please note, some of your college courses can't confirm correct books or resources until later in the year and some courses do not have an associated book)

A number of you will also have received a call from Connexions, if you have not yet had this call, please inform Mr Drennan after the June break – he will keep you all updated via the school Facebook account.

**The world has changed... but before this, our school changed, we changed:**

It's hard to believe just how much the country, indeed, the world has changed in the past few months. That said, change is no surprise to you – it was your year group that really stepped up and showed the community and all those around us just how *"absolutely fantastic"* we could be. At the start of the year when I first met you all I was clear saying... we could do this, and it was you that had the power to make a difference to the schools and your own future- you did us proud. In terms of motivation, dedication, attitude, commitment, you have set the bar high for all other year groups.

For this, the staff and I want to say

*"Thank you and well done"*

**We will meet again:**

We still hope to provide some of the fantastic things we discussed before breaking up, these things are rewards for just how well you done and continue to do. Of course, they all depend on social distancing and other government guidance. We still hope to have:

- Year 11 Christmas Reunion Prom, Flamingoland trip and hoody give-away
- Year 11 Leavers Day, shirt signing on school field (distant future) and hopefully a BBQ



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### Your exams and our actions:

As you know, Year 11 exams were cancelled and all schools and their students have waited for confirmation on how grades will be awarded. All teachers across the country have now been asked to enter “**centre assessed grades**”, this includes Year 6, Year 13 etc - centre assessed grades are similar to a prediction.

In order to make this assessment, schools must take a wide range of evidence into account. Your most recent mock / PPE can make up most of the weighting for this (as this was a real exam paper students sat across the country last year). However, will also look at other assessments, the progress you were making and results from units within BTEC's you may have been completing for the last 2 years. We then submit these grades to the exam boards. Following this, every school has been told that exam boards will “**standardise**” the grades to essentially stop schools potentially cheating – this is the right thing to do and in principle, I support this.

That said, as a small school with an exceptional year group that made rapid progress, we are not completely sure how the “standardisation” will affect you – no one knows!

After grades are awarded to every student across the country, we have been told there will not be an appeal process. This means every student will have these grades “fixed”. However, we have also been told that while there will not be an appeal process, there is an intention to offer students optional exams in the Autumn. As such, you may still wish to prepare for sitting some of these exams **to replace a grade** you feel does not reflect what you may have achieved if you had been able to sit exams this summer.

With so much resting on your exam grades, and knowing how well you were doing, I think it wise as a school, we offer you on-going help and support to essentially help you prepare yourself for taking these exams **if you choose to**- it would be naive to think sitting an exam much later in the year without some form of preparation or learning would achieve the same result you were on track for this summer.

As such, we feel some form of **learning plan** to support Year 11's is wise and we will ask you if there is any GCSE subject you may be particularly interested in continuing to learn to maximise your results. We may also suggest to you whether we think participating in a learning plan is appropriate, but please understand, if we make this offer, it is not because we think you may be awarded a low grade, it is because we know your future ambitions and simply think “back up” may be wise. At the same time, some may wish to simply sit exams next year at college / 6<sup>th</sup> Form – this is normally restricted to Maths / English but you must check!

Critical subjects you may wish to continue to study and sit in Autumn at Norham include Maths, English, Science, History or Geography. While some students may opt to participate in all subjects, some may opt out completely - we will agree this in consultation with you. Mr Drennan will ask you to complete a short survey next week regarding potential learning plan options to establish your interest / potential uptake. I have not heard of other schools offering this, but we are not other schools, we are Norham and you deserve it!

Please note, schools will not have performance measured this this year. While that is a great shame as we were set to prove how well we are doing, it is nowhere near as important as securing the grades you deserve!

We wish you and your families a safe, healthy, peaceful and happy half-term.

Yours Faithfully, Mr Conway