



5th January 2021

Dear Year 11 and Parents,

COVID-19 Parent Update

The Prime Minister announced yesterday that GCSE exams will not take place this summer in the *normal way*. In the coming days we will get details of what will replace them but it seems reasonable to expect students will receive grades based on a similar system to 2020. **This involved teachers assessing performance using class and homework, coursework, mock exam results and other evidence.**

We are aware of the shock and disappointment this news will bring. The government had consistently told students, parents and teachers that *exams would happen* this year, and we all planned on that basis. However, once the initial shock has worn off, I would urge you all to consider these three points, as they should provide some reassurance;

1. **Your hard work will still be recognised.** None of the effort you have shown so far, and will continue to show in the coming months, will be wasted. On the contrary, the new system will make sure this is fully reflected in your final grade.
2. **Your eventual results will be indistinguishable from your real exams.** In the long run, it won't matter your grades came via this system. You will still be able to progress to Sixth Form, College and University in the normal way. The value of your GCSE qualification is not being altered, only the way they are administered. None of your ambitions for the future will be affected by this decision.
3. **The new system will be fair and balanced.** Grades will be awarded based on objective evidence. Any grades that your teachers set will be moderated carefully, to ensure they are consistent within and between schools. If any parent or student were to be disappointed with their eventual grade, we expect there to be a mechanism to appeal and take a follow-up exam in the autumn, just as there was last time.

I know it is asking a lot of you all, on top of everything you have been through already, but you must **take these points on board and keep going**. Today, you will be shocked and disappointed - anyone would be in your position. But in the coming days you will process the news, and in the long run you will be absolutely fine. Your teachers were aware of this possibility and will guide and support you through the remainder of this year. **For now, just keep working hard, complete your online lessons and know that every piece of work you complete will still make a difference.**

Yours sincerely

Mr J Lewis
Head of School