



18 November 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

We are acutely aware of the disruption that COVID 19 has had on our year 11 students and the implications of this on their preparation for GCSE's. We know that as a result of the most recent case some students will now be facing their third isolation period and will miss the calendared mock exam window.

As a leadership team we have looked closely at what we can do to ensure that students have the most equitable experience possible and don't miss the opportunity to test their knowledge and understanding in a formal mock process. I think we must acknowledge that there is no perfect solution to address the current situation and compromises have to be made.

Mocks are a valuable opportunity to practice exam technique under exam conditions, have a sense of the demands of an examination timetable, plan revision and ultimately identify gaps in knowledge and understanding. In this regard mocks are a valuable learning opportunity for students to gauge what it is they must do to secure stronger progress. Mocks do not replicate the full examination process at this stage as content is still being delivered, consequently mock grades at this stage provide only an indication of future outcomes and can not be relied on to provide a formal grade.

The CAG process in the summer made use of teacher assessments, mock grades, professional judgement and rank ordering. The mocks whilst important for the reason above are only part of the methodology in forming a view of attainment, so are not the only assessments that we would use. To ensure that students get the best chance possible we have decided to add another mock window in March. We have also increased the frequency and type of internal assessments to ensure we have the best evidential base possible to form any CAG grades should they be requested.

We are reluctant to push mocks back as the future is uncertain and there are no guarantees that these would run with any less disruption. We would also shorten the marking and feedback time, which would mean students have less time to address the gaps the mocks have identified in readiness for their examinations. There is also currently debate around schools closing earlier than planned and a move to more robust lock down measures, if this were to happen we would then potentially miss our mock window altogether.

Some parents and students believe that they have been disadvantaged due to the fact that those isolating now have extra revision time; it could be argued that those students still in school have actually gained the advantage of specialist input face to face by their teachers. Given the circumstances this is not something that we can control but are trying to mitigate as best as we can through the use of live lessons and Google Classrooms.

It has also been mentioned that students may cheat and share responses and questions, which could of course happen, though they would be cheating themselves ultimately. Mocks are meant to be indicators of current performance and identify next steps to secure predicted and target grades, they do not provide a final result. It could also be stated that a student would be unlikely to share information to others as any advantage given to a fellow student would potentially harm their own position within a rank order and would therefore be counter productive. We could set different papers and questions, but this too presents issues around grading, moderation and standardisation. Students could also argue that their paper was more challenging than others and as such the results aren't fair.

We plan to follow the outline already shared and will talk to all students about how the mocks should be conducted. We have added the additional mocks in March as an opportunity for all to fine tune their exam preparations.

As always, we will endeavour to do all we can to support your child through this challenging time and put them in the best possible position for their examinations. Sadly we have no control over the number of cases of COVID19 so cannot guarantee there will be no further disruptions, this though should highlight the importance of fully engaging with all work set be it in school or online.

Click [HERE](#) to see the mock exam timetable.

Click [HERE](#) to see the contingency plan for students missing any mock exams.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Teece', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

W Teece  
Headteacher