



5 January 2021

Dear Yr 11 / 13 Amazing students

Copy to Parents / Carers

I am sure today you will have now become aware of the announcement that was made last night and the implications this will now have on GCSE and A-Level exams. With such significant news it may all still be sinking in and you might be feeling a whole range of emotions from apathy to anger to sadness. This is perfectly understandable and a natural response to such a significant announcement that impacts on your education.

It was clear from the announcement that exams will not go ahead as originally planned, but the education minister is in meetings with OFQUAL, schools and exam boards to decide how best to allow students to show the knowledge and skills they have already attained (and will continue to attain).

As I write this I do not have all the answers you will want and the uncertainty is one of the key things that creates such high levels of anxiety and also stress. Sadly we have all become very accustomed to this uncertainty and found our own ways to cope, but I know for some this presents a very real challenge. So to any of you struggling with this news, we are here for you, your teachers are here for you and we will support you.

Despite the government telling us consistently that exams will run this year, even when at times this has seemed unfeasible given the disruption to learning some of you have experienced with repeated periods of self isolation, that is what we have been working to and in many ways still need to do. We are not yet sure what will replace the exams to assess your learning, We will obviously update you with any further developments as soon as we can. No matter what happens in the coming days, be reassured that your time in education will be recognised, in time your results will be indistinguishable from those of other years and in due course a fair and balanced system will be established to allow you progress to the next steps in your journey.

As a school we will do all we can to make sure that your talents and ability are fairly recognised and also support in ensuring you secure the destinations of your choice, be that university, college, P16, apprenticeships or employment..

At this point in time it may seem reasonable to question the point in studying hard and engaging in learning but I would ask you take time to truly reflect on why you attend school. This goes beyond securing academic grades and includes developing strong character traits that will serve you through life, experiencing new things, foster a love of learning, developing as a person and challenging yourself to be the best version of you. None of these are examined but are all hugely important and matter just as much. That said we know that whatever system the government puts in place, they will want some

strong evidence before awarding any grades. This evidence can only come from the work you have produced and the assessments you have completed, for this reason alone you have to keep going, you have to show up and do your best so you are not cheated out of what you rightfully deserve and we know you can achieve.

So whilst we plan how we are going to support you best, it is critical that you engage with all that is being set, offered in Google Classrooms and that your teachers are asking you to do. What you do now and every day moving forwards will make a real difference to the outcome you get. Whilst many things are outside your control right now, how you respond to this new and significant challenge is within your control.

I know you can do it, we all believe in you and we all want the best for you. Make sure you keep engaged and keep in touch. We are here for you.

“Work Hard, Be Kind (to yourselves)”

Yours sincerely

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

W Teece
Headteacher