



6 January 2021

Dear Year 11

The Prime Minister announced on Monday evening that GCSE examinations would not take place in the normal way and today he has confirmed that GCSE examinations are cancelled. In the coming days I am hopeful that we will get specific detailed information regarding what will replace the examinations, but it seems reasonable for us to also plan that students will receive grades based on a similar system to the summer series 2020. This system involved teachers assessing performance using classwork and homework, coursework, mock examination results and other evidence.

I am aware of the shock and disappointment this decision may have caused, particularly as over recent months the government have consistently told you, your parents and/or carers and your teachers that examinations would happen this year, and you have all been working towards that.

However, having had time to reflect I would ask you all to consider the following four points as they should provide some reassurance:

1. **Hard work will still be recognised.** The work you are being asked to do now from home could potentially be used to support decisions regarding your final grade. The quality of your work and your attitude to learning will all be taken into account if we have to rank you as per the system last year.
2. **Effort 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; the new system will make sure that this is fully reflected in the final grade you achieve in every subject. Your outstanding commitment to your studies will reap rewards and secure you the grades you are capable of and deserve. Please also remember that for any subject you are planning to go on to study Post 16 that you will need the knowledge that the online learning is offering.
3. **Eventual results will be indistinguishable from real exams.** In the long run, it won't matter that your grades may have come via this system. You will still be able to progress to college, apprenticeships and University in the normal way. The value of your GCSE qualifications is not being altered, only the way they are administered. None of your ambitions for the future will be affected by this decision.



4. **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 for the 2020 series.

I know I am probably 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. As you read this you may still be anxious, shocked and/or disappointed which is perfectly understandable under the circumstances. However, in the coming days you will process the news, and in the long run you will be absolutely fine. I want you all to remember that your teachers and I were aware of the possibility of changes to or cancellation of your examinations and will guide and support you through the coming months.

For now, all you need to do is trust your teachers, turn up for all your Teams lessons, keep working as hard as you can and remember that **every piece of work you complete will still make a difference.**

Year 11, please know we have got you and you can do this; I mean it and more importantly I believe it.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Strong
Principal