

6th January 2021

Dear Y11 & Y13 Students,

cc Y11 & Y13 Parents & Carers

The Prime Minister announced on Monday evening that GCSE and A Level exams would not take place this summer. Today, the Secretary of State for Education confirmed that grades will again be based on teacher assessments, as was the case for the class of 2020. This will involve teachers assessing performance using a wide range of evidence, such as classwork and homework, coursework and mock exam results.

I am aware of the shock and disappointment this news will bring. The government had consistently told students, parents and teachers that exams *would* take place 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 that this is fully reflected in your final grade.
2. **Your final results *will* reflect what you would have achieved in the real exams.** In the long run, it won't matter that your grades were awarded this way. You will still be able to progress to sixth form, college, university or the workplace in the normal way. The value of your GCSE and A Level qualifications remains the same. 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 award 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.

Right now, you may be asking yourself what's the point of continuing to work hard if you are not going to sit exams? But remember, your teacher assessed grades will be based on the work you do right up until the end of the year. You have an opportunity to make the next few months really count – so go for it!

Since the beginning of the pandemic, and especially since we returned to school in September, for the overwhelming majority of you, your attitude to learning has been outstanding, and you have done everything we have asked of you. It's now time to build on what you've achieved so far, and most importantly, **keep going**. Ultimately, it is not the exams themselves that will set you up for the future, but the **knowledge, skills and attributes** that you have developed and will continue to develop that will place you in the best position to move on to your chosen destination next year. Your teachers are there to support you through the remainder of this year. **For now, just turn up to all your online lessons, keep working hard, and know that every piece of work you complete will still make a difference.**

Best wishes to you all.

Stay safe,

Mrs E Renavent

Headteacher