

6th April 2020

Dear Students; Parents / Carers and Staff,

Firstly, thank you again for all the support you are giving to our learners as they continue with their studies from home, we hope the Easter break brings the catch up time for work that we have had communicated is needed.

You are all doing an amazing job ... thank you!

I am writing to you today with an update on the summer **A Level / AS Level and GCSE grades** as we start a new week.

I have chosen to share this letter with all students, parents / carers and staff, as although the current examination situation impacts on the Year 11 and 13, I am aware that a number of others, both parents / carers and staff have expressed their concern over this matter. As well as looking at these two year groups, I can also share that I have also had a conversation with the DFE over our concern for the Year 10 and 12 in particular and we will expect to hear some news in the near future about how the Year 10 and Year 12 cohorts will be supported due to the impact this situation has had on their learning and I will then be able to update you fully.

Regarding the Year 11 and 13 cohorts, late on Friday 03 April we heard that the DFE, working with Ofqual, the examinations regulatory body, have finalised plans to implement the arrangements the Secretary of State for Education has set out for the summer exams for A Level; AS Level and GCSE's.

Please note, with regard to the **OCR** and **BTEC qualifications** we are still waiting to hear the final details of the solution for students following these programmes of study and will update you on this as things develop. However, we can reassure you that we are not expecting the current situation to have any negative impact on the results for these qualifications.

Over the last few weeks' students studying A Levels, AS Levels and GCSE's understandably have wanted reassurance, and teachers have urgently needed to know what to do and when, so we are pleased to have an update on the situation that we can share.

We have now seen the published information about the process and timetable that will apply this summer, which includes the steps that we need to follow and more detailed guidance on how to consider the full range of evidence that our students will already have available in order to be able to submit their assessment grades.

I wanted to take the time today to reassure students, parents / carers and teachers that they can have confidence in the school's approach to meeting the needs of the DFE and Ofqual requirements and that we are doing everything we can to make sure students are not disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances.

There are two further letters featured on our Coronavirus letters section on the website that will outline the Ofqual guidance, in order to further support your understanding of this matter:

- Letter to students;
- Guidance for parents / carers / teachers.

I do know that for our learners the most important thing to know is how will grades be calculated?

We have now been asked to send to the exam boards two pieces of information for each subject a student is studying, this will be based on what we know about each students' work and achievements.

The information requested is:

- **The grade we believe a student was most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned.**
- **Within each subject, the rank order of the students at school, by performance, for each grade.**

This information will be used to standardise judgements, allowing fine tuning of the standard applied across all schools and colleges.

The DFE have made it clear that this grade will not be a student's target, working at or predicted grade. Instead, to set these grades we will be considering a wide range of evidence, such as previous assessments; classwork; homework; results in any set assignments and any mock exams; any non-exam assessment or coursework students might have done; and general progress during the course.

This information will allow Ofqual, working with the exam boards to standardise grades across schools and colleges, to make sure that, as far as possible, results are fair and that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged because their school are more generous or harsh than others when making those judgements.

Whilst we endeavour to undertake this significant task, as we need to get it right for every single one of our learners, can I ask politely for students and parents / carers not to make contact with the school over what an individual's perceived grade has been set at or should be. This will detract us from the significant task in hand and we need to remain completely focussed at this time so that we get this exactly right.

Please note that the planned system means the final grade a student receives could be different from the one we set by the school and sent to the exam board, so we cannot inform students and parents / carers of anything related to grades, with this information being confidential.

Additionally, can I ask for students and parents / carers not to ask teachers, or anyone else at school, to tell them anything about the grades they will be sending to the exam boards or where they have been placed in the rank order of students, as they will not be allowed to share this confidential information with you.

To support us in this process we will not need to set additional mock exams or homework for a student centre assessment grade, and I can reassure our learners that they will not be disadvantaged if they were not set, or were unable to complete, any work given out after schools were closed.

Finally, with regard to examination information, please be reassured that we have been informed by the DFE and Ofqual that the grades students will get this summer will look exactly the same as in previous years, and that students will have equal status with universities, colleges and employers, to help them move forward in their lives as planned. We will all need to have trust in this system at this difficult and challenging time.

I hope my letter goes some way to reassuring you that we will be working with great diligence over the next few months to make sure that all of our students, whether in Year 11/13 or Year 10/12, who deserve to do their absolute best achieve the rightful grades they have worked for.

Yours sincerely,



Miss Katie Belcher
Deputy Headteacher