

Re: Summer Exams 2021

5th January 2021

Dear Year 11 Students, Parents and Carers,

The Prime Minister announced yesterday evening that GCSE exams will not take place this summer in the normal way; this does not mean that all exams are cancelled. In the coming days we will get details of what might replace them, but it seems reasonable to expect students might receive grades based on a similar system to 2020 in **some** subjects: centre assessed grades. This involved teachers assessing your performance using class and home learning, coursework, mock exam results and other evidence. However, we cannot provide you with full details as yet; as the Prime Minister stated, *'We recognise that this will mean it is not possible or fair for all exams to go ahead this summer as normal. The Education Secretary will work with Ofqual to put in place alternative arrangements.'*

We are absolutely aware of the shock, confusion and disappointment this news may bring. The government had consistently told students, parents/carers and teachers that exams would happen this year, and we all planned on that basis. However, once these initial feelings have worn off, we would encourage you all to please consider the following three points, as they should provide some reassurance and know that we will work our hardest to support every Year 11 student through the next few months:

1. Your hard work will still be recognised. None of the commitment to learning that 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 this is fully reflected in your final grade.
2. Your eventual results will be indistinguishable from real exams. In the long run, it won't matter your grades came via this different system. You will still be able to progress to college, Sixth Form and Post-16 courses in the normal way. The value of your GCSE qualifications are not being altered, only the way that they are administered, as far as we know currently. None of your ambitions for the future will be affected by this decision. But, they will rely on your continued hard work and commitment to your school work and studies across all of your subjects.
3. The new system will be fair and balanced. Grades will be awarded based on objective evidence, we believe. Any grades that your teachers set will be moderated carefully, to ensure that they are consistent within and between schools. If any parent/carer 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.



We know that it is asking a great deal, on top of everything you have experienced since March 2020, but you must take these points on board and stay focused: *Believe, Belong, Become*. Today, you may be shocked and disappointed – anyone would be in your position. But in the coming days you will process the news and new information that is shared with you, and in the long run you will be absolutely fine. Your teachers were aware of this possibility and will guide and support you through the remainder of this year.

For now, continue to turn up to all your online lessons, as per your normal school timetable, keep working hard, and know that every piece of learning that you complete including your March mock exams, will still make a difference.

If you have any questions, please speak with us.

Yours faithfully,

E. Good

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Deputy Headteacher

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