

5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Year 11 Students,

### Reference: GCSE Exams

The Prime Minister announced yesterday that GCSE exams will not take place this summer '*in the normal way*'. We do not know specifically what this will mean but it seems reasonable to expect students will receive grades based on a similar system to 2020. As you might be aware this involved teachers assessing performance using class and homework, coursework, mock exam results and other evidence. However, as it stands currently, we do not know what this means and the public examinations scheduled for January, are set to continue as planned. We are expecting updates from JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) and the DfE (Department for Education) in the coming days and as and when we get these, we will of course update you.

We are aware of the shock and disappointment this news will bring. The government has consistently told students, parents and teachers that exams '*would happen this year*' and we all planned on this basis. However, once the initial shock has worn off, we would urge you to think about the three points below, as they should provide some reassurance for you in the coming weeks:

1. **Your hard work will 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 this is reflected in your grade.
2. **Your eventual results will be indistinguishable from the real exams.** In the long run, it won't matter that your grade came via this system. You will still be able to progress to college, work, an apprenticeship and university if you wish to 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.
3. **The new system will be fair and balanced.** Grades will be awarded on objective evidence. Any grades that your teachers set will be moderated carefully to ensure they are consistent both within and between schools. If any student or parent were to be disappointed with their eventual grade, we would expect there to be a mechanism to appeal and take a follow up exam in the autumn, just as there was this year.

We know it is asking a lot of you, especially on top of everything you have been through already, but it is really important that you reflect on the points above and keep going. Your teachers, and all of the staff are here to support you and are working really hard on your behalf to provide you with really high quality learning resources whilst you continue to learn at home. We need you to attend any examinations that you have in the coming weeks which are still continuing, all your online lessons and to keep working hard and remember, every piece of work you complete will make a difference to your future.

Kind regards,



Miss Aimee Mitchell - **Headteacher**