

COVID-19 Update, Mr Reynolds, Executive Principal, Tuesday 5th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

You are all now aware that the Prime Minister has announced a new national lockdown from midnight tonight. During this period of national lockdown all schools and colleges (with some exceptions) will be closed and only open to vulnerable children and young people with a need and, the children of critical workers – you can find the definitions to these [terms here](#)).

If you do intend to send your child into school, could I urge you to contact their Year Manager first so we know to expect them and can follow up on any problems. We expect students to be in correct uniform (appropriate footwear can be worn in the snow) and follow our same expectations of behaviour at all times. All learning will be online and so we would encourage your child to bring in their own earphones. Our online lesson provision is already in place and your child should follow their timetable each day. If they have any questions about their work they should contact their teacher in the first instance. If they experience any wider queries they should contact their Year Manager. We are all here to support your child over the next few weeks.

Y11 and Y13 Students, Parents and Carers

After the Prime Minister's announcement last night that, *"it's not possible or fair for all exams to go ahead this summer as normal, the education secretary will work with Ofqual to put alternative arrangements in place"* we are all waiting for the details of what will replace the summer exams. It seems reasonable to expect that students will receive grades based on a similar system to 2020, but probably with some form of exam as part of teachers' assessment.

We are aware of the shock and disappointment that this news brings. The government has consistently told students, parents and teachers that exams would happen this year and we have planned on that basis. While we know that things may feel uncertain at the moment, we can confirm the following reassurance:

1. **For any students with BTEC exams in the next couple of weeks**, our current understanding is that these will go ahead as planned.
2. **We continue to plan for mock exams**. The details and timings of these will be confirmed but it likely that they will take place at some point after this lockdown in March or April. The revision and information events planned for Y11 students and parents have been postponed and will be delivered later in the year.
3. **Your hard work will still be recognised**. None of the effort that you have shown so far, and will continue to show in the coming months, will be wasted. *It is vital that students continue to engage in their remote learning and seek help and support when needed.*
4. **You will still be able to progress to Sixth Form and University as planned**. The value of your GCSE and A' level qualifications is not being altered, only the way they are administered. None of your future ambitions will be affected by this decision.

5. **The new system will be fair and balanced.** Grades will be awarded on objective evidence. Teachers will use a range of evidence including classwork, homework, coursework, mock exams, assessments to consider student grades. Any grades that your teachers set will follow Ofqual guidance and will be moderated carefully.

We are asking a lot of all our students, to keep going on top of everything that they have been through but we know that our students and families are resilient and supportive of each other. Today we are all shocked and disappointed but in the coming days and in the long run we will make this work. Your teachers will continue to guide and support you and do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any concerns.

For now, please encourage your child to turn up to all their online lessons, urge them to keep working hard and know that every piece of work they complete will make a difference to their life chances.

Covid 19 testing

The latest notification from the DfE is as follows:

"The coronavirus (COVID-19) testing programme should be continued to enable weekly testing for staff and daily close contact testing for those staff and pupils attending secondary schools and colleges. This programme also allows schools and colleges to test pupils on return."

With this in mind, we will be sending out more details shortly along with a consent form. I'd be grateful if you could look out for this and complete the form as soon as possible.

As more information becomes available, particularly around public examinations, I will write again.

If you have any questions or concerns please just get in touch.

Best wishes