

26 March 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to update you on the school's current position in relation to Year 11 and Year 13. As you know, last week the government explained that there would be no external exams (GCSEs, A Levels or vocational exams) this summer. They explained that they are developing a system with the exam regulator, Ofqual, to determine student grades and that this system will take a number of factors into account. Details from gov.uk are:

The Government's priority is now to ensure affected students can move on as planned to the next stage of their lives, including going into employment, starting university, college or sixth form courses, or an apprenticeship in the autumn.

This means ensuring GCSE, A and AS level students are awarded a grade which fairly reflects the work that they have put in. There will also be an option to sit an exam early in the next academic year for students who wish to. Ofqual will develop and set out a process that will provide a calculated grade to each student which reflects their performance as fairly as possible, and will work with the exam boards to ensure this is consistently applied for all students. The exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead.

To produce this, teachers will take into account a range of evidence and data including performance on mock exams and non-exam assessment – clear guidance on how to do this fairly and robustly will be provided to schools and colleges. The exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment, and use this information to produce a calculated grade for each student, which will be a best assessment of the work they have put in.

Ofqual and exam boards will be discussing with teachers' representatives before finalising an approach, to ensure that it is as fair as possible. More information will be provided as soon as possible.

Understandably, we have received a significant amount of concerned communication from students and parents since the government announcement. We are in the process of rigorously checking Year 11 and Year 13 predictions which were due to be released this week. Given the current change in circumstances, we will await further guidance and then publish the data (as we normally would) and our response as a school. The Government has indicated that it will provide more information to schools, students and parents as soon as possible. I will write to you at that point with an update. Until then, I would ask that students and parents refrain from contacting us for more details on their own individual position until the definitive guidance is made clear.

Given the Government's indication that a range of student performance evidence will go into the final grade, it is very important that Year 11 and Year 13 students continue to produce the work that

has been set by teachers. For example, if GCSE or A Level non-examined assessment (what we once called 'coursework') is required, students must ensure that this is completed and sent to teachers as per their requirements on the website. If there is any confusion about this, please contact the relevant staff via email or via the admin mailbox.

We want the students to recognise that a hiatus in their learning will also hamper them in other ways; those going from Year 11 to sixth form, college or an apprenticeship will need to maintain their learning so that when they move to that new setting they will be able to cope with the rigour. Similarly, sixth form students progressing to university or a degree level apprenticeship need to continue so that they do not face a dip in their knowledge into the future.

I do appreciate that this has been a very upsetting experience for Year 11 and Year 13 who were expecting to demonstrate their strengths this summer. We will do everything we can to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in this situation. I recognise that these qualifications lead to progression for both year groups and it has always been one of my biggest priorities to facilitate excellent progression routes for all.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Andriot". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

James Andriot
Head of School