

4th January 2021

Dear Year 11, 12 and 13 Students,

As you may be aware, the Prime Minister announced this evening that GCSE and A Level exams will not take place this summer in the normal way. In the coming days we will receive further details of what will replace them, but it seems reasonable to expect that students' grades will be based upon a similar system to that which was applied in 2020. This involved teachers assessing performance using classwork, homework, coursework, mock examination grades and other, assessable evidence.

I am fully aware of the shock and disappointment that this news will bring. Up until today, the Government had consistently told students, parents and teachers that exams would continue to take place this year, and we had all planned and prepared on that basis. However, we must now, as always, take this new information on board; and, once the initial shock has worn off, I would urge you all to consider these three points, which I hope will provide some reassurance:

1. Your hard work will still 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 fully reflected in your final grade.

2. Your eventual results will be indistinguishable from real exams. In the long run, it won't matter that your grades came via this system; you will still be able to progress to Sixth Form and University in the normal way. The value of your GCSE and A Level qualifications will not be 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 based on objective evidence. Any grades that your teachers set will be moderated carefully, to ensure they are consistent within and between schools. If any parent 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 during the previous examination year.

I realise that, on top of everything you have already endured this will be a shock and a disappointment. However, I would urge you to take these points on board and to keep going. Today, you may be dismayed, and overwhelmed; anyone would be in your position. However, in the coming days you will process the news, and in the long run you will be, I assure you, absolutely fine. Your teachers and all of our school staff were fully aware of this possibility, and I can promise that we will continue to guide and support you through the remainder of this year.

For now, we would ask you to just turn up to all your online lessons; to keep working hard; and to know that every piece of work you complete will still make a difference.

Thank you again for all of your hard work, dedication and fortitude in the current circumstances.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Baker', enclosed within a horizontal oval shape.

Emma Baker
Principal