



RH/SF

7 January 2021

Dear Year 11 Students, Parents & Carers

Following the announcements from the Secretary of State for Education yesterday I can now confirm that all exams will be cancelled this summer. The government have cancelled GCSEs and announced that teacher assessments will be used without the algorithm which caused so many problems last year. The fairest way forward is to also cancel BTEC exams, which for us is only ICT, this exam will not go ahead in February as planned and teacher assessment grades will also be used for this subject. We expect that all other non-GCSE courses, which do not have exams, will need to be completed and are confident that with most of these students still attending school during lockdown that this will be possible.

In order for teachers to give the fairest possible grades we will be setting past exam papers once the students return. We are awaiting further guidance from government on how teachers should determine the grades, but we expect that we will need to provide evidence of rigorous and robust assessment. This means past exam papers marked and graded using the published mark scheme. It is not possible to set a timetable for these exams now as we do not know when schools will re-open. We know that this will not be before 22 February and I have outlined in my earlier letter how we are providing for learning to continue at home during this time.

The advice from Ofqual, the organisation that will determine how the GCSE grades are set, is clear that Year 11 students should continue with their learning to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to progress to further education and employment.

*We know that this is a difficult time for students, their parents and carers, teachers and trainers. Our message to students is this: please continue to engage as fully as you can in your education. That will be online for the majority of students, or face-to-face for those students still going in to their school, college or training provider. This will put you in the best position, whatever arrangements are made for your qualifications. It's important that teachers and students can focus on the knowledge and skills needed to equip students to progress to the next stage, whatever form that might take - whether to college, an apprenticeship, university or employment.*

The letter from Ofqual published yesterday is available here in full:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-message-from-simon-lebus-chief-regulator-on-exams-in-2021>

*Respect | Honesty | Compassion | Resilience | Industry | Courage*



It is vital therefore that Year 11 students continue to work hard during lockdown in preparation for exams. What I can say is that these will not take place in the first few weeks students return, but COVID permitting, they will take place to give every student the best opportunity of showing what they can achieve. Students will also have another opportunity to sit maths paper 1 and improve on their mock English Language papers if needed. Teachers will then use these grades together with any coursework completed, classwork, previous test results and attitude to revision and learning to determine the final grade. All grades will then be checked by subject leaders and ultimately, I will agree them all before they are submitted.

I can assure you that we will conduct this process professionally and students will get the grades they deserve. In many ways this is how things should be every year, removing the possibility of exam nerves, the impact of illness on the day etc. However I appreciate some will be feeling uncertain and indeed upset that they will not be able to prove how fantastic they are in a real exam. Please do not worry, keep working hard and you will get the grades you know you are capable of achieving. Staff are available if students need to talk to them, E-praise is the easiest way to get in touch. Our pastoral and wellbeing staff are also available to offer support, Mrs Brice can also help with access to support from outside the school.

As soon as we have a date for opening schools to Year 11 students I will write again with a clear plan for the remaining months and an update on the assessment process. In the meantime if you have any questions I will do my best to answer them, please email or message on E-praise.

I hope the next few weeks of home learning is successful and hope you and your family stay safe and virus free.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

**Richard Harrison**  
Headteacher