

19th March 2020

Dear Parents & Carers of Year 11,

By now, you may have seen the announcement from the Secretary of State (SoS) for Education regarding GCSE & A Level exams and school closures. Please take the time to read this letter through with your child as soon as you can.

Exams

GCSE exams will not take place this year. Whilst I appreciate this will come as a massive shock, I want to reassure students that we had anticipated this and all is by no means lost. The headline will be “exams cancelled”, but there are three other critical elements to it which I would urge all students to note:

- 1) **“Recognition”**: The SoS promised clearly that all students in Year 11 will receive the recognition they deserve for their hard work, and qualifications will be awarded. This suggests some sort of teacher assessment, based on predicted grades, although to be clear I do not know what this is yet and we will have to wait for more information.
- 2) **“Progression”**: The SoS said clearly that “no student should pause their ambitions” to progress to Sixth Form or further education and training next year. Schools, colleges and universities will adjust, and work off the new system that is in place.
- 3) **“Fairness & Appeals”**: As students will not have the ability to sit an exam, and qualifications will be awarded via some other mechanism, the SoS was clear that this will be done fairly and that parents and students will be able to appeal this, if they feel the eventual award has not been fair.

So, we will keep teaching Year 11, they will keep learning and taking assessments, and they will still get the rewards for their hard work. I appreciate this will be an emotional time, but we will support your children, and they should take comfort from the fact that we are here for them and all students in UK are in the same position.

Please see the letter to all parents and carers that will be released later today for a general update on the school closure, ‘vulnerable students’, EHCP students and students of ‘key workers’.

These are unprecedented times, and the government has asked for a “war time” effort. Year 11 are now at the front of that, in having to adjust. Today they will be shocked, in the coming days they will absorb this, and over the long term they will be fine, we can promise you that.

Yours sincerely

Tom Beveridge
Headteacher