



THE DEAN  
ACADEMY

◆ Enjoyment ◆ Achievement ◆ Community

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Richard Brand, Headteacher

4<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Information relating to GCSE examinations in summer 2021**

You will doubtless have been following the recent press coverage on the subject of next summer's public examinations. Because of the significant speculation about whether these exams would run as normal we fully acknowledge that there has been a heightened pressure on our Year 11 students. It is inevitably difficult to get a sense of perspective amidst such uncertainty and students are understandably concerned that everything they do, (or don't do,) may count towards their final grade. Within this context I wish to make it clear that we are hugely impressed with the very responsible attitude to study that our KS4 students have adopted since September.

As I write this, our Year 11 students are coming to the end of their first week of mock examinations and have done excellently. They have remained positive, determined, and focused and initial indications show that this cohort of students are set to be our highest performing year group of recent years.

Alongside this, we also saw this week an announcement from the Government regarding summer examinations, and measures to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on education. The new measures include:

- Examination series moved back by a period of weeks to give more time to cover content.
- More generous grading than usual, in line with national outcomes from 2020.
- Students receiving advance notice of some topic areas covered in GCSE, AS and A levels to focus revision.
- Exam aids - like formula sheets - provided in some exams giving students more confidence and reducing the amount of information they need to memorise.
- Repeat exams to give students a second chance to sit a paper if the main exams or assessments are missed due to illness or self-isolation.
- If students miss one or more exams due to self-isolation or sickness but have still completed a proportion of their qualification, they will still receive a grade.
- If a student misses all their assessments in a subject, they will have the opportunity to sit a single contingency paper per subject held shortly after the main exams. This will take place between 28 June to 16 July 2021 and timetabled to allow at least a 10-day gap after each subject's final paper in the main series. Work has started on writing this timetable.
- In the extreme case where a student has a legitimate reason to miss all their papers, then a validated teacher informed assessment can be used, only once all chances to sit an exam have passed.



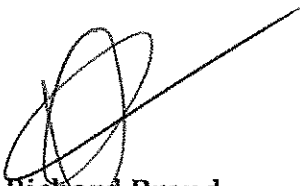
Whilst this announcement was welcome, it does not change anything for us at The Dean Academy. We will continue to work with students to best prepare to be fully successful regardless of the way they are assessed – examination or otherwise. This announcement does go some way, however, to recognising the huge disruption caused by COVID-19.

Looking forward, in January students will receive the results of their mock exams. These results will also form the basis of our conversation with you at our Year 11 parents evening which will be held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January. This is likely to be virtual, but we will write to you with more details nearer the time. Based on these results we will re-design our period 6 programme, so students are working on priority subjects. As an additional support we have given more curriculum time so that students have a daily slot where they can do high-quality revision, supported by their tutor.

Finally, we recognise that we have been tremendously fortunate this year at The Dean Academy that we have been able to keep all of our students learning, on-site, with little disruption. This is largely because our COVID-measures are working, but also because our community is remaining vigilant and taking precautions. If we can avoid periods where students need to work from home it is to our advantage so, as always, we need anyone who develops symptoms to get a test immediately and follow the protocols.

We will continue to keep you informed of any further changes as we become aware.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Richard Brand**  
Headteacher

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