

07/01/2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

National Lockdown Announcement – School Closure

Following the government announcement on Monday 4th January 2021, during the period of national lockdown, schools will remain open to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers only.

All other students will continue to learn remotely until February Half-Term.

Implications of the Government’s comments about summer 2021 examinations

Following the Government’s decision to close schools to all students other than those the School recognises as vulnerable, and the children of critical workers until February half term and move to remote learning, the Prime Minister has said:

“In these circumstances, we do not think it is possible for exams to go ahead fairly this summer. The Secretary of State for Education will be asking Ofqual to consult rapidly on an approach for alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly”.

As mentioned in the TEAMS message yesterday morning to Year 11 students, as a school, we entirely appreciate that this message may have left students in Year 11 feeling frustrated, anxious and confused. We know that Year 11 students are preparing for their exams very thoroughly with careful revision and the completion of practice papers, so the timing of this announcement is particularly frustrating.

At this challenging time, we need to work together to ensure your son/daughter remains fully focused and does not make inaccurate assumptions about this development.

The Secretary of State has since confirmed that: *“school’s will not be asking students to sit SATs, GCSEs and A and AS Level exams this summer. Together with Ofqual, the Department for Education (DfE) will consult next week on how to fairly award all pupils with a grade to ensure they can progress to the next stage of their lives.”*

Students MUST continue to revise and complete courses and we will push to be able to provide a second opportunity for trial examinations as we are conscious that many Year 11’s current grades do not yet fully represent their potential.

Therefore, it is essential that your son/daughter continues working to the best of his/her ability in lessons and continues to attend all lessons on-line. Teachers will continue to teach the GCSE curriculum. Students will need to submit their work to their teachers via TEAMS, so that their teachers can provide feedback. Teachers will be keeping a record of the work each student submits.

The work that students complete from now on is very important as the School will be submitting grades for each student based on the work that they have produced. This is what happened to Year 11s. (Those that worked hard, achieved well and those that didn't, less so.)

Students maintaining good study habits and continuing to study to the best of their ability will also be important preparation for apprenticeships, college studies, or sixth form at the end of Year 11.

Your son/daughter must keep this in mind and continue to work to the best of their ability over this half term. The trial exams (TBC) could be an important source of evidence if your son/daughter's teachers are asked to submit grades based on the work students have produced during these exams.

We really understand how challenging and difficult this announcement has been for your son/daughter and for you as parents/carers. It is essential, however, that your son/daughter remains focused so that they can still achieve the best grades they are capable of.

Your son's/daughter's teachers will fully support them over the next few weeks with remote learning and feedback on work in order to be in the best place we can be for when Ofqual informs us of exactly what the alternative assessment arrangements will be.

I will write to you with further updates as and when we receive any further information on this matter.

Please note that Schools, academy trusts and local authorities can now request help to increase mobile data allowances for children and young people who:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education.

Thank you for your on-going support. Please do not hesitate to contact your son/daughter's form tutor, student support coordinator or subject teachers if they can be of any further assistance.

Best wishes,



Mr K Hobbs

Headteacher