



Principal: Dr Katharine Vincent

Tuesday 5th January 2021

Dear Year 11 and Year 13 students and parents/carers,

As you know, the Prime Minister announced last night that GCSE and A Level exams will not take place this summer in the normal way. In the coming days, we are expecting to be told what will replace them, but it seems reasonable to expect students will receive grades based on a similar system to 2020. This involved teachers assessing students' performance **using class and homework, coursework, mock exam results and other evidence.**

I am aware that you will probably be feeling worried, shocked and disappointed at this news, especially as we had been told that exams would take place as normal this year. At this very difficult and stressful time, I would like you to consider carefully the points below, which I hope will give you some reassurance:

1. **Your hard work and achievement will still be recognised.** We know how hard you have worked and how many challenges you have already overcome. The effort you put into your work over the next few months will not be wasted. Any new system for awarding grades will reflect and recognise your progress and your achievement.
2. **Your results will be indistinguishable from those of students who did take their exams.** In the long run, it will not matter whether your grades were awarded after the sitting of exams or not. The important thing is that you continue to learn and progress over the coming months, so that you can demonstrate that you have successfully completed the qualifications for which you are studying.
3. **Your ambitions for the future will not be affected by this decision.** The value of your GCSE, A-level, Cambridge National and Cambridge Technical qualifications is not being altered, only the way they are administered. You will still be able to progress to Sixth Form or university in the normal way. Universities and employers will recognise your qualifications in the same way. Your future careers will not be affected.
4. **The new system will be fair and balanced.** Grades will be awarded based on objective evidence. Any grades that are recommended by your teachers will be moderated carefully to ensure they are consistent within and between schools. We expect there to be a mechanism for students and parents/carers to appeal grades or to take exams at a later date, as there was last year.

I know it is a worrying time, particularly given everything you have already been through, but please do try to take these points on board. Your teachers and other staff at the school are here to guide and support you through the remainder of this academic year. We will also work with any Year 11 students who are progressing into our Sixth Form, any Level 2 Year 12 students progressing to Level 3 and any students who are progressing to university.

Please therefore can I ask that you attend all your online lessons, keep working hard, stay positive and know that every piece of work you complete will be valued by your teachers and will still make a difference.

Yours sincerely,

Dr K Vincent
Principal