



CGW.jbr

25 March 2020

Re: exams, the future and everything

Dear Year 11 Students,

I hope you all healthy and well as you get this letter and not too bored.

I am sorry that we did not manage to say goodbye properly before you left. We will all meet again when the coronavirus finally passes and we will have a proper end to your GCSE cycle.

However before that, I wanted to write to you to let you know where I think we are with the exams, what the school can do and what I think that you should do. Like everything that is being said by everyone at the moment, this is just my opinion and it is my opinion on 25th March, so events could change it!

However, I do have a bit of experience and I have been looking at what other schools are doing and thinking too, so that I can make sure you are kept informed and supported.

I hate bullet points, but it will be easier if I use them, so this is where I think we are:

- At the moment, the Government and Ofqual (the Examination Boards' regulator) say no exams and that they will gather information to feed into an algorithm, which will produce your grade. If you like it, you keep it, if you don't then you can resit the examination when they schedule them after the coronavirus outbreak is over.
- We do not have great detail on what that data will be and how the algorithm will affect it but I suspect it will be mock results, coursework results, historic school and even country and national results.
- I strongly suspect, as does every Head that I have spoken to about this (all four of them), that any other robust data that schools have will also be taken into account and could make the grade produced by the algorithm better.

Which leads me to...

- For the four weeks after the Easter holidays, I will have your teachers set you an exercise each week. It will take about an hour and it will be in the style of examination questions which will be marked against the generic mark schemes of your examination boards. You will complete them and send them in, for marking and recording. The papers and the mark schemes will also be kept for reference.
- By the end of that four week process we will have some robust data that we can evidence, which can demonstrate the progress that you have made through the whole GCSE, and which can contextualise mocks, coursework, historic data and so on.



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- This process will also keep you mentally active and will set you up to start work on A level or apprenticeship work which will come next, so that you do not have to start cold in September.

I know this looks like me setting work for the sake of it and that I cannot force you to do it (how will I punish you if you do not complete??).

However, my message is an honest and clear one and it is so important I am going to put it in bold:

every good school in the country will do a variant of this, so that they have meaningful data for their students when they are called upon to produce predicted grades. If we do not have this data, I suspect any predictions will be looked at less favourably and it is MASSIVELY in your interests to give these tests your best. You should take as much control of your exams as you can!

That is about that – the tests will be set after Easter and your teachers are there to help you. I cannot overstate how much I want you to complete this work, as it will help you this summer and for the rest of your lives. It will not determine your final grade on its own but it will massively support you getting the best grade that you can.

If you have any questions, queries or worries then email your teachers or your tutors or me.

Have as good an Easter as you can, rest up, but get your work in place and do these exercises!

Stay safe,

Dr CG Walker
Headmaster

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