



5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am sure many of you will have heard last night's announcement by the Prime Minister and the government's decision to close secondary schools until February half-term. There will continue to be a provision in school for vulnerable students and children of critical workers, as previously advised. All other students will continue their learning online. Mr Rome, Assistant Head, will tomorrow be sending out guidance re online learning.

There is currently much in the media and social media regarding GCSE exams being 'cancelled' and 'scrapped', so I wanted you to see the exact words that were sent to schools by the Department for Education last night:

**"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."**

The phrase 'we do not think' means this is not absolute, and nor do we know, at this stage, what the government's intentions are with regard to GCSE grades, assessment etc. When schools re-open, we may be asked to hold formal assessments and give additional assignments and/or coursework to support professional judgements regarding GCSE grades. Any decisions that schools would make about GCSE grades would be based on evidence and therefore it is crucial that students continue to provide work to their teachers that is of the best possible quality.

We therefore strongly advise Year 11 students to continue to work conscientiously on the tasks set by their teachers. It is in their best interests to maintain the highest level of focus and concentration on their learning, so that they do not fall behind with their studies and do not disadvantage themselves relative to other Year 11 students across the country. We will still be holding our upcoming Year 11 virtual Parents' Evening next Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January. Mock exam results will be emailed prior to the evening. Please use the link you have been sent to book your appointments online. We look forward to 'seeing' students with their parent/carer at the online appointments.

I will of course keep you updated with information as we receive it in school.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs P Wilson  
Head Teacher

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