

20 March 2020

Coronavirus - Update 14

Dear Parents and Carers

I do hope that the first day of remote learning went well and that all pupils have begun to establish their routines and accustom themselves to new ways of learning and the environment in which to do it. Teachers have spent all day today sorting online resources and readying themselves for a full week of virtual learning from Monday, including beginning virtual lessons, through Microsoft Teams.

You have already heard from Mrs McLellan regarding our plans for looking after the children of those households of key workers. We will be reviewing the demand for this over the weekend and will revert on Monday with the plans that will be in place from 0800 on Tuesday morning.

The main purpose of this update before the weekend is to alert public examination groups to the latest announcement from the government, and to advise you of our immediate response to it.

The Grading of Public Examinations

The government's announcement today regarding the awarding of grades to public examination students gives us some information to work with to support you and your children. Understandably the detail is not yet complete, and it may not be for some time, but the following is already clear:

- That the overarching intention is to support students onto the next steps in their education, further education, or employment journey, so that they are not disadvantaged by this summer's disruption.
- That they will, therefore, receive public examination grades.
- That these grades will be awarded by the end of July.
- That they will be calculated from a combination of sources that will include:
 - Data already known by Ofqual (who oversee public examinations for the government) such as previous GCSE results, or baseline assessment data from previous years.
 - Data from the marking of any non-examined assessments that have been or can still be completed (such as coursework).
 - Data provided by schools from internal assessments (such as Trial or Mock examinations).
 - Grade predictions from schools based on teacher professional judgement of likely outcomes had exams taken place conventionally. These will be generated afresh once the College has been advised on the new arrangements.

- That the precise way in which this data will be collected and balanced into a final grade is yet to be decided.
- That in the event of any child being unhappy with the grade they are awarded, they will be entitled to sit actual public examinations in the Autumn of 2020 or the Summer of 2021 instead.

Quite rightly there will now be a period of consultation between Ofqual, Examination Boards, and School representatives. Our Senior Leadership Team will meet on Tuesday of this week to discuss the implications of this new information and further advice will then follow to parents and students. Ahead of that update, however, the following is already clear:

1. That there is an absolute necessity for students in Year 11 and Year 13 to remain focused on revision and consolidation of their courses, in partnership with their teachers, and that this will remain the case across next term, because they may well be required to generate more assessment data for the College to use, or even to prepare for real examinations later in the year, should that be preferable.
2. That the College Leadership Team will now actively consider how we might organise and administer robust remote assessments for students early next term, were we to consider that data set to be both eligible and of potential benefit to candidates.
3. That any student still undertaking coursework or any other non-examined assessment should now view its completion to the highest possible standard as a priority. That data is likely to matter significantly.

As has always been the case, and will continue to be so, College teaching staff will continue to support your children academically and pastorally as this picture becomes clearer.

We will update you further next week but, in the meantime, please have a very restful weekend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N P Hewlett', written in a cursive style.

Mr N P Hewlett
Headmaster