24 April 2020

Dear Year 11 Students, Parent and Carers,

I hope that you have all been able to enjoy a break, albeit in rather strange circumstances. I also hope that you, your family and your friends are all safe and well and coping with the lockdown.

I am writing to you to remind you of the arrangements around the awarding of grades this summer and also with information about home learning from this point onwards. I have tried to answer some of the more common questions that you have sent in, but please do continue to contact Mr Moynihan should you have other individual questions and we will do our best to answer these for you.

What we know about how GCSE grades will be awarded:
We will be asked to send examination boards two pieces of information for each of your subjects, based on what we know about your work and achievements:
• the grade we believe you were most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned (this is known as a centre assessed grade)
• within each subject, the rank order of students at school within each grade

This information will allow examination boards to standardise grades across schools, to make sure that, as far as possible, results are fair and that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged because their schools are more generous or harsh than others when making those judgements. This means that the final grade you get could be different from the one the school sends to the examination board.

How will centre assessed grades be awarded?
Centre assessed grades will be based on a wide range of information relating to your performance in a subject. This is likely to include: classwork and homework; assessments and mock examinations; coursework and/or performances; progress review data and your general progress during the course. Schools are not allowed to share centre assessed grades or rankings with students or their families.

What about work completed after Friday, 20 March 2020?
The work that you have completed since school closed can be taken into account in awarding your centre assessed grades. However, students cannot be disadvantaged if they have been unable to complete the work. If your home learning work suggests a change in performance from your usual work, we must use that information with caution, for example, if your grades at home have dropped below your usual grades, we will not allow that to lower our centre assessed grade.
If you have not yet finished your coursework, you will not be disadvantaged because of this. We also understand that some students perform better in certain types of assessments, for example some of you may feel you would have done better in your real examinations than in your mock examinations. This is why centre assessed grades take into account a wide range of information about your performance.

What about BTEC, Functional Skills and Entry Level qualifications?
Schools will award centre assessed grades for Health and Social Care BTEC and Functional Skills and Entry Level English and mathematics, as well as for GCSEs. Examination boards are working out exactly how this will be done, and they will release guidance in the near future. When we know more information, your teachers will share this with you.

When will students get their results?
The Year 11 results day will be Thursday, 20 August 2020. You will receive a separate letter about Sixth Form enrolment, currently planned to take place on that day.
Will we keep learning from home?
We are now almost at the point where your final examinations would have begun. For this reason, from Monday, 27 April 2020, you will no longer be set home learning, if the course content has been covered in a subject. Some subjects may be finishing the final elements of the specification, but most will have finished. Subject Leaders will post on Show My Homework (SMHW) for the whole year group when their course has been completed.

Why do we need to have finished every course?
It is important that you have studied the whole course. This is because some of you may choose to sit examinations in the autumn term for one or more of your subjects in order to try for a higher grade than that awarded in August. Students will also be able to sit their examinations in summer 2021 should they choose to. Finally, those of you wishing to continue your studies in a subject will want to have covered the full content and to have maintained your study as far as has been possible.

Can I start my Year 12 course early?
We would like to give you an opportunity to engage in some enrichment learning in any subjects that interest you. This may be to keep yourself engaged in subjects that you enjoy during the school closure, to broaden your knowledge of ideas and concepts, or it may be because you think you would like to continue studying the subject in Year 12. Students’ choices may change between now and Year 12 and so we would advise you to take advantage of the enrichment activities set for as many subjects as you would like to. The enrichment offered will also help to bridge the learning between Year 11 and Year 12 and will help you to find out more about the skills, ideas or concepts explored through Year 12 courses, or to develop the skills that you already have in preparation for the next stage in your learning.

There is no requirement that you engage in the enrichment activities, but we want you to have the opportunity to do so and we know that many of you will. Enrichment activities will be posted on SMHW for the whole year group. For most there will be no requirement to submit anything and you may have a range of tasks to choose from over a period of time. You just need to select those you are interested in. Enrichment tasks will be set for all subjects we offer at Key Stage 5 including those we do not offer at Key Stage 4 such as business studies, sociology and psychology. Any student is welcome to engage in any subject’s enrichment activities. There may also be other non-subject specific enrichment opportunities posted by Mr Moynihan.

Will we know enough to be able to start Year 12 courses with confidence?
We will adapt our Year 12 courses to help to bridge the gap between your Year 11 experience and the demands of Year 12 courses. For now, if you are able to access the enrichment opportunities, this will help you to engage with some of the ideas that will help you to start Year 12 with confidence.

I hope that this has given you useful information and reassurance and has enabled you to look ahead to the positive next steps in your education, employment or training. We recognise that you may be moving into apprenticeships or colleges; all of you are welcome to engage in any of the enrichment learning that appeals to you, even if it does not link to your future plans.

Finally, I take this opportunity to remind you that we continue to be here to support and advise you. Your Year Team have been pleased to hear from you and will continue to source support, offer guidance and respond to your questions and concerns.

Yours faithfully,

Ms. C. Hames
Deputy Headteacher