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24 March 2020

Dear Year 11 & 13 Parents & Students,

The dust has settled a little on the decision by the Government to cancel this year's public exams. We were hoping that, by now, we would be able to give you a clear idea of exactly how your son or daughter's grades are going to be calculated. However, Ofqual and the exam boards are still working on the process and we are awaiting their guidance. What we *do* know is that the school will be required to submit grades that are based firmly on evidence of prior attainment and this might come from a variety of sources - including mock exams, teacher assessment, previous GCSE achievement (for Y13).

The indication that mock exams will be a main source of data for our students may well cause students some concern. No one knew that we would be in this position back in January, when those exams were taken, and none of the students appreciated how significant their performance might turn out to be. They were *mock* exams. As a school, we are keen to provide all of the students the opportunity to demonstrate their level of achievement prior to grades being submitted. With this in mind, all Year 11 and 13 students will be offered the opportunity to sit further **in-house assessments**, early in the Summer term, in order to inform their existing grade. These additional assessments will be used, alongside existing data, in order for the school to arrive at a realistic, and importantly, validated grade.

Over the Easter holidays all students, therefore, need to **continue to work** on completing their courses and revising as they would have under more "normal" circumstances. All coursework should be submitted to the highest standard possible. Revision resources will be provided by subject teachers using our online Google Classrooms. When term starts in April students will then be supported through a range of revision tasks and we will deliver a series of online 'open book' assessments, in each subject, through which students can show their progress. We hope that this will provide a good opportunity, for all students, to demonstrate their appropriate level while also providing some much needed focus for them during these uncertain times.

We are also conscious that families may be concerned about the long period ahead when their children will lack the structure and learning opportunities that school normally provides. With this in mind, all Year 11 students will also be offered the opportunity to do an **Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)** over the summer term. The EPQ is a fantastic, project based qualification worth half an A Level. The Project can be in almost anything, from an academic essay through to creating a cookbook!

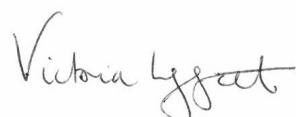
We have attached further guidance to this email. There is a significant 'taught skills' element to the EPQ and this would be delivered as part of our distance learning package. Students would be supported by staff with the aim of completing their EPQ for submission in the Michaelmas Term 2020 or Summer Term 2021. We hope that most students will take up this opportunity, using their enforced time at home wisely by getting a qualification under their belt that they can use for future UCAS applications, giving them something that will set them apart from other students of their age group.

We appreciate that there continues to be uncertainty regarding the examination outcomes and no school will be sure about how best to proceed until the Government provides clearer guidance. We do not want our students to be 'in limbo' and we hope that you appreciate that the steps laid out above provide some focus for students whose lives have been turned upside down. It is obviously subject to change, if any new announcements fundamentally alter the criteria which has been hinted at so far. If you have any queries about this, please do get in touch and in the meantime we hope that you and your families stay safe over the coming weeks.

With best wishes,



Claire Martin  
Academic Head (Y9-11)



Victoria Liggett  
Academic Head (Sixth Form)