

24 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to bring you up to date with aspects of the current situation which affect year 13 students.

**A level grades:** Examination boards will be asking schools to submit a grade that reflects what we believe the student would have received if the examinations had taken place as planned. At this stage, additional guidance has not been provided but we understand that we will be asked to consider a range of evidence which will include mock and non-examination assessment data to produce a final grade. We feel confident, having monitored students' progress for many years that we will be able to determine fairly, the highest grade each student deserves. At A level, we firmly believe a student's approach as seen throughout the course, determines outcomes. We will also take account of the typical grade lift from mocks to the actual examinations as well as contextual factors such as school's impressive progress measures when making these decisions. At this stage, students should not complete and/or submit any additional work to be considered by the staff making these decisions. Grades awarded will be scrutinised by teachers, heads of department and senior leaders to ensure the process, once it has been confirmed, is carried out fairly and robustly. We appreciate this is an unsettled time for all, but ask students and parents not to contact staff to discuss grades. I would like to stress again we feel confident that the school's part in this process will ensure that the grades awarded are as deserved. Comments from teachers' unions suggest that the methods being considered by the exam boards are sensible and well thought through, but we do not expect further details for a few weeks. The suggestion, at the moment, is that results will be awarded by the end of July.

**Additional opportunity to take examinations:** The recent update has stated there will be an opportunity for students to appeal their grades if they don't believe that the correct process has been followed. An examination season is being planned for early in the academic year for students who wish to go ahead and take this opportunity in light of their finalised results. Whilst there is so much uncertainty at this stage, we suggest students take a few weeks away from A level work – perhaps until after the Easter holiday – at which point we hope to have clarification about whether this examination season is something that our students will even need to think about.

**University decisions:** Like schools, universities are navigating their way through this situation. I have been pleased to see that their priority has been to reassure schools and students. UCAS has communicated on behalf of the universities in an email sent to all applicants today: "it is important that you have all the information available to you when making decisions on your offers and understand how awarding of qualifications will work this summer." They have extended the deadline to reply for any students who had all decisions confirmed by 31 March. This pushes back the confirmation deadline to mid-May. The reason for this move is to allow students to make informed decisions once further details about the grade awarding process have been agreed.

As ever, I am keen to support students as best as I can over the next few weeks and months. At the moment, I suggest decisions are put on pause whilst we await further details. At whatever stage this happens, I will be happy to have 1:1 conversations via whatever medium is possible! I hope this provides sufficient information for you at this stage; be reassured that we will keep you informed of any changes. I hope that you and your families stay safe and well at this difficult time.

With very best wishes

Hannah Khan