



BEDFORD
FREE SCHOOL

www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk

6th January 2021

Dear Pupils and families of Y11

I have no doubt you will have been aware of the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday evening outlining that it will not be possible for GCSE exams to go ahead as normal this summer. I am aware of the shock this news will bring to pupils and their families and I want you to know that we share your level of disappointment.

This afternoon the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, addressed MPs in the House of Commons and provided an update on how pupils in England will be assessed at the end of the year. He confirmed that this would now be through a system of teacher assessed grades.

The Government is working closely with Ofqual (the exams regulator) and exam boards to consider how this will be undertaken. Their main aim will be to ensure the fairest possible outcome in these circumstances and that pupils receive the grades they deserve. I know you will want to know exactly what this means and the impact it has on your immediate future. I know that this degree of uncertainty will also increase levels of anxiety. I promise to keep you updated as soon as we know more.

I want to stress that it is critically important that all pupils in Y11 continue to engage in their education by completing remote learning, maintaining their focus and staying motivated with their studies. This will ensure you are in the best position, whatever the final arrangements are made for your qualifications.

I also urge you all to consider these three points, as they should provide some reassurance:

- 1) Your hard work will still be recognised. None of the effort you have shown so far, and will continue to show in the coming weeks and months, will be wasted. On the contrary, whatever the new system it will be fully reflected in your final grade.
- 2) Your eventual results will be indistinguishable from real exams. In the long run, it won't matter your grades came via a different system. You will still be able to progress to Sixth Form or college in the normal way. The value of your GCSE qualifications is not being altered, only the way they are administered. None of your ambitions for the future will be affected by this decision.
- 3) It is important to remember that education is so much more than a grade but is part of who you become, and although you may not fully appreciate it yet, all you have learned and continue to learn will open doors for you and enable you to experience the world in new and exciting ways.

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R E S P E C T • H O N E S T Y • H I G H E X P E C T A T I O N S

I know this situation is asking a lot of you all, on top of everything you have been through already, but you must take these points on board and keep going. You will be shocked and disappointed – anyone would be in your position. But in the coming days you will process the news, and in the long run you will be ok. Your teachers will continue to guide and support you. We will continue to work with you in planning for your Next Steps and to secure Sixth Form or college places. For now, just turn up to all your online lessons, keep working hard, and know that every piece of work you complete will still make a difference.

We will be in touch in due course and once we know more but if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Mr Wood (Assistant Principal), via email: twood@bedfordreeschool.co.uk.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Blake', written in a cursive style.

Tim Blake
Principal