



7 January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Year 11 – GCSE Update

I wrote to you a couple of days ago, ahead of the new term starting, as parents of Year 11 students. Can I firstly thank you all for your support in encouraging and ensuring student engagement with lessons over these first few days; in the face of uncertainty, Year 11 has been incredibly positive. Year 11 teachers have been gushing with their praise and it has been heartening to see the mature way in which students have approached this start to term.

Yesterday, Gavin Williamson confirmed that the Summer GCSE exams would not go ahead and instead a form of Teacher Assessed Grade would be submitted. This is, obviously, hugely disappointing for lots of reasons, most notably that students do not get the opportunity to take exams and show the very best of themselves for all the world to see. However, there was also perhaps a sense of inevitability of this decision, having entered this second phase of extended remote provision within the 2 year window of their GCSE courses.

Either way, the announcement raises a host of questions for us a school, mirrored, I'm sure, by yourselves and your son/daughter and we are in a difficult 'holding pattern' whilst we await the details from the DfE on what this means for students over the coming weeks and months. Please bear with us and as soon as we know what we are facing, we will communicate it with you.

Subject teachers have been advised to continue teaching the course content.

You will likely be aware of the difficulties faced by students (and schools!) last summer when GCSE exams did not run, and although, at MECE, students on the whole were in a position to go on and study their intended courses and chosen destinations, the entire 2020 Centre Assessed Grade process was littered with difficulties. We have been advised by the DfE and OFQUAL that they are working on a robust and fair process to support schools in assigning a Teacher Assessed Grade for this year's Y11 students in lieu of their exam grade. We do not know yet specifically what this will involve but be reassured that it will consider a wide range of evidence beyond that of their November Mock Grade. This is a particularly important message for students who perhaps underperformed in their November Mock Exam and had resolved to make a concerted effort to improve and succeed over this term.

For now, all we can do is keep encouraging Year 11 to engage with their learning and continue to demonstrate their best abilities in the work they complete. We will continue to support them from our end both in terms of the quality of provision and of course in a pastoral sense too.

There are undoubtedly questions that need answers but the focus, for now, will remain on delivering the curriculum so that students are prepared for whatever eventuality comes and of course for their Post 16 study in September.

Yours faithfully



Miss E Bliss
Deputy Headteacher