

19 March 2020

Dear Year 11 Students

cc: Year 11 Parents and Carers

Following the Secretary of State for Education's announcement yesterday and our assembly earlier, I wanted to share in writing the few details that we know.

At this stage, the only information we have within our education system, is the information which is in the public domain and therefore likely to be what you and your parents/carers already know.

I am incredibly upset that you will not have the opportunity to shine in the GCSE examinations. I am so proud of how hard you have worked over the last 5 years and you have been an absolute delight to work with. You are lovely young people and excellent role models to the rest of our school community.

Once it became clear that the epicentre of the virus was in the middle of the exam season, the prospect of running a full suite of exams became unfeasible. The decision therefore was whether to run a partial season – say, just A levels and perhaps English and maths GCSE. However, the problem with this is that we would end up with three groups of students – some who had sat all of their exams; some who had sat some; and some who were unable to sit any if they were unwell or self-isolating. Trying to regulate fairness across such diverse groups would be impossible for the awarding bodies and regulator. So – unpalatable as it may seem – it's actually fairer to treat all young people the same by having none of them sit exams.

During our assembly I outlined the following key points:

Firstly, you have studied a rich curriculum for the last 5, indeed 12 years, crafted to provide you with knowledge and understanding essential to being an informed citizen and knowledgeable adult. This cannot be taken away from you and it remains essential that you remain inquisitive and interested life long learners, so that you build on this strong foundation.

Secondly, we have no indication at this stage how you will be assessed. Following the assembly, I listened to the Secretary of State on Radio 4 who confirmed that there would be no examinations and that you would get your results in the summer as usual. Details on how you will be assessed will be released by the Government tomorrow. Once I have the detail, I will share this with you and with staff.

In the meantime, it would be very sensible to gather all your work into an organised system so that you have a complete portfolio of each subject with your books, examples of work and past examination responses. This may need to be shared with your teachers. I will not speculate as to how you will be assessed or attempt to second-guess the Government's next announcement, but having a portfolio of work may be beneficial.

I am already in touch with the Principal of two of the largest local sixth form colleges and over the next few weeks we will be working with all our local post-16 providers as the detail emerges from the Government so that we fully support you with the next important stage in your education

We will celebrate our 5 years together. There is uncertainty around whether the Prom will go ahead in June or not. However, our time together will be celebrated in some way.

I know this is unsettling for you. You are resilient young people and I was immensely proud of how calm and considered you appeared to be this morning. You have my full support and that of all staff in our school, so please let any of us know if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Hemmings'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'P' and a decorative flourish at the end.

Mr P Hemmings
Headteacher