



7 January 2021

Dear Year 11 and Year 13 students

The Prime Minister announced this week that GCSE and A Level examinations will not take place this summer in the normal way. In the coming days we will get details of what will replace them, but it seems reasonable to expect students will receive grades based on a similar system to 2020. This involved teachers assessing performance using class and homework, coursework, mock exam results and other evidence.

I am aware of the shock and disappointment this news will bring. The government had consistently told students, parents and teachers that exams would happen this year, and we all planned on that basis. However, once the initial shock has worn off, I would urge you to consider these three points, as they should provide some reassurance:

1. **Your hard work will be recognised.** None of the effort you have shown so far, and will continue to show in the coming months, will be wasted. On the contrary, the new system will make sure this is fully reflected in your final grade.
2. **Your eventual results will be indistinguishable from real exams.** In the long run, it won't matter that your grades come via this system. You will still be able to progress to NOA Sixth Form and University in the normal way. The value of your GCSE and A Level qualification is not being altered, only the way they are administered. None of your ambitions for the future will be affected by this decision.
3. **The new system will be fair and balanced.** Grades will be awarded based on objective evidence. Any grades that your teachers will set will be moderated carefully, to ensure they are consistent within and between schools. If any parent or student were disappointed with their eventual grade, we expect there to be a mechanism to appeal as there was last time.

I know the last year has been difficult for all of you but please take these points on board and stay positive. For now, just engage with your online lessons, keep working hard and know that every piece of work you complete will still make a difference.

**Your key goal for the coming weeks is the next set of mock exams which will take place in school when you all return; we plan to run these in March but will confirm this when we get a clearer picture about the timeframe for students' return to school.**



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**These exams will be a chance for you to show your potential and will be vital in helping teachers to award centre assessed grades that will be the key to your final grade awards.**

Please continue to work hard and stay positive. I look forward to seeing you again soon.

Yours sincerely

*Alison Merrills*

**Alison Merrills**  
**Principal**

cc: Year 11 and Year 13 Parents and Carers

**Principal:** Alison Merrills

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