



Our Ref: KLO/ExamInfoY11

23rd October 2020

Dear parent/carer

Re: Y11 Exam Information

I wanted to update you on the most recent information we have received from the Department for Education (DfE) regarding examinations in 2021. The full announcement from the DfE can be accessed in the link at the bottom of this letter.

- Firstly, the government says that GCSE and A level examinations (and their equivalents) will go ahead in England next year.
- Most examinations will be 3 weeks later than usual to allow for more teaching time. A link to the provisional exams timetable, issued by JCQ can be found at the end of this letter.
- One English GCSE paper and one mathematics GCSE paper is due to take place in the week beginning 24 May (just before half term). The rest of the examinations will start on 7 June and end on 2 July.
- Result days are due to be on Tuesday 24 August for A levels and Friday 27 August for GCSEs.
- We have already received confirmation from exam boards of any changes to specification content to compensate for missed teaching time. The DfE announcement stated that there would be no further adjustments to examination content. Teachers have already made the required adjustments to the curriculum.

There are however many questions that remain unanswered, such as what happens if students continue to have further disruption due to Covid-19? Some students will be at a disadvantage over others as they are required to self-isolate; whilst all schools will have remote learning practices in place for these students, it is sadly not the same as having face-to-face time with their teachers, yet they will all sit the same exam. Some schools have already had to make the difficult decision to close either partially or fully. The whole premise behind exams is to ensure fairness, a 'level playing field', and the decision to reduce some content and push back exams provides additional time for teaching and completing courses but does not ensure fairness when taking these exams.

This has been acknowledged by the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, who states: "Exams are the fairest way of judging a student's performance so they will go ahead, underpinned by contingency measures developed in partnership with the sector." We may know more by Christmas.

So what can we do in this time of uncertainty whilst we wait for further news from the government on what the contingency measures may look like? In hindsight, we learnt valuable lessons from the 2020 exam series when schools were required to submit Centre Assessed Grades. These grades were formed from a range of evidence such as: classwork, homework, non-examined assessment (coursework), in-class assessments and mock exams. Our message therefore, to all our students, is to make every lesson count, or in reality, every learning opportunity count.

Now, more than ever, the mock examinations need to be taken seriously by students. They will not only provide a crucial opportunity to prepare for the summer, but will help gauge progress and the individual student priorities for moving forward and inform any required Centre Assessed Grade.

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2020/1 KS4 Mock Examinations - The mock exam window will be between 14th to 17th December 2020 and between 4th and 15th January 2021. We will provide you with a detailed timetable for these mock examinations after half term.

This week we have held a special assembly to inform students of the changes and the importance of preparation, particularly important if a Centre Assessed Grade was requested as in the previous academic year. We are delighted to be able to invite you to view our assembly by following the link at the end of this letter.

Finally, keeping each other safe is so important remember: HANDS, FACE, SPACE, wash hands, cover faces and whenever possible give each other as much space as we can.

To all our families, please stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely

K Loosley

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Deputy Headteacher

Links referred to:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/students-to-be-given-more-time-to-prepare-for-2021-exams>
- [JCQ provisional 2021 exam timetable](#)
- <http://bit.ly/Year-11-Exam-Assembly-Oct20>