

8 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers of Year 11 pupils

Re: GCSE exams, Summer 2021

Tomorrow I am holding Year 11 assembly via Microsoft Teams and you are welcome to listen in. It will be scheduled from 8.20am in the Year 11 Work At Home Folder. I thought it might be reassuring for those parents who were able to attend to hear the same messages as I will be giving Year 11 once they are back at school. If you can't make it, I hope this letter will bring you up to date. There may still be some changes to the dates as the government has not yet finalised all arrangements. However, for now these are my plans.

GCSEs 2021 – what we know

Pupils will be awarded grades based on assessment by their teachers. These must be submitted by 18th June to the exam boards. GCSE Results Day will be Thursday 12th August. Teachers are advised to use the time remaining to balance teaching with assessments and to base assessed grades on the standard at which the pupil is performing at that time rather than on their potential. Teachers should use a range of evidence such as classwork, homework, coursework, trial exam results and engagement to reach their assessed grades.

Don't worry...

Teachers will not decide the grades in isolation. We have a weekly Year 11 progress meeting where we discuss every child on an individual basis and did this throughout last term. We pride ourselves on knowing our pupils well and we want the process to be fair and accurate.

Next Steps – a rough timeline

Pupils have 2.5 weeks in school until Easter. I had said they would finish at 2.30pm but our staff have agreed to continue to teach Year 11 until 3.30pm as we understand pupils may feel anxious about lost time. Therefore, all pupils who wish to can stay until 3.30 for extra lessons in maths, English, science, history, geography and French. All Year 11 pupils attended until 3.30pm last term and made amazing gains in their learning as a result. I am not making it compulsory now; it is a choice, but a strongly recommended one.

Easter

Our staff have agreed to run revision days over the Easter holidays in maths, English, science, history, geography and French, as long as guidance is permitting.

After Easter

There will be seven weeks in the next half term. Four will be for teaching the curriculum and then we will begin trial assessments from May 5th or thereabouts. These will run until May half term when we will mark the trials. After that, we will be able to spend our final two weeks teaching to close gaps in knowledge evidenced in the trial assessments so that pupils continue to make as much progress as possible.

Trial assessment 3

We will treat these assessments as if they were the real GCSE exams, running all our usual after school revision and morning booster sessions. We want to do everything we can to support our pupils.

Leavers' Day

We do not have a date yet when Year 11 will officially leave but expect it to be on or after 18th June. Although we are unable to hold a prom we will try to make Leavers' Day as special as we can and we will be placing an order for Leavers' hoodies in the near future.

I apologise that I do not yet have all the answers for you. If you have any concerns please contact Mr Brown, Year 11 Learning Manager. In the meantime, thank you very much for all your support at this busy time, and I can't wait for Wednesday!

Kind regards

Mrs A Rooney
Principal