



8 January 2021

Rachel Hutchinson
Principal

Dear Parents/Carers

Following what has been one of the most extraordinary and turbulent starts to any New Year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each one of you for your support and contributions in order that we have been able to deliver our Remote Learning Programme to all Year Groups with minimum disruption to planned learning.

Students across all Years have been incredibly independent in setting themselves up on Teams and actively engaging with their remote learning lessons in such a confident manner. Thank you for the overwhelming supportive emails and such positivity shared across social media sites. I cannot begin to describe how much of an impact this has had on staff morale and has helped to motivate everyone during such difficult times. Please continue to use the Year Group support email address for any remote learning issues in order that these can be resolved as quickly as possible for you.

Many of you will have heard the announcement by the Secretary of State for Education that this summer's cancelled GCSE and A Level examinations will be determined by 'teacher assessed grades'. At present, we do not know for certain how this will be conducted.

Whilst we are pleased to hear that schools will be able to have significant input into the grading process, at this stage, we do not know what supporting evidence will be required to ensure that this is a fair and robust system across the country. It is important to note at this time that students should not assume that their latest set of mock results will be the main determinant in their final grades; there is still a large amount of learning and revision time between now and the end of their courses.

Over the coming weeks, as we receive further guidance from the government, we will continue to update you. Last year, evidence involved a mix of teacher assessment from classwork and homework, as well as results from in-class assessments and more formal examinations. I want to be clear that students who engage in all remote lessons and work hard over the coming months, including this lockdown period, can still make significant gains and improve their grade from their mock performance and our current estimates. Hard work and effort really does pay off. It is anticipated that we will continue with a second set of more formal mock examinations later in the term, but finalised details of these very much depend on government updates and guidance alongside COVID-19 arrangements.

We are mindful that if students were to become complacent and allow their focus to drift, it is quite likely that their grades could decline from their current position. We therefore need to work together over the coming months to maintain high levels of motivation and support for our students to ensure that they can achieve the best grades they are capable of. Attending registration every morning is vital in ensuring that your child receives the pastoral support they require, and Tutors can monitor student wellbeing.

We look forward to working together with you during these final terms of Year 11 and to support further, we will be holding a virtual Year 11 Parents' Evening on Wednesday, 20 January 2021. Further details will be released shortly.

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We will be giving an additional parental briefing on Thursday, 14 January 2021 in order to launch the Remote Learning Parental and Student Survey and to provide any relevant updates at government level.

In the meantime, here are a few updates and reminders:

- I hope that you have found time to listen to the student briefing from Wednesday which can be found on our website. I cannot stress enough how important daily exercise will be throughout this time and encourage students to take a good look at our virtual enrichment offer to support their weekly activities.
- Whilst we are in the virtual classroom and student time on their devices has increased, can I please take this opportunity to remind all parents of the importance of e-safety and of our College expectations on the acceptable use of technology. Please do ensure that you have the necessary safety controls set up at home to support the safe use of the internet and also be vigilant on your child's use of their devices. Our Electronic Device Policy is available on the College website and this needs to be adhered to whilst in the virtual classroom.
- If your child travels to school on a College bus, you will have received a letter from us regarding the updated arrangements regarding payments. Please do ensure that you have read this carefully.

We appreciate that many of you will face challenges during the national lockdown and we encourage you to keep in contact with the College via the Year Group support email addresses for remote learning, or your child's Tutor if appropriate.

Yours faithfully

Rachel Hutchinson
Principal