



Dear Parents / Carers

### **Cancellation of GCSE Examinations for Summer 2020**

As most of you will know by now, the government has taken the unprecedented decision to cancel all GCSE examinations this summer for students in Year 11.

I have also had a number of parents already contact me to ask what will happen to their child's grade.

The government has published some information which helps us to understand how GCSE grades will be awarded. There is still quite a lot of detail to be determined, however, and many factors which have to be considered before the exam bodies will publish grades, towards the end of July (earlier than usual, as no papers have to be marked).

I have copied below a summary of the key points:

- *Grades will be based on a range of factors, for example, non-exam assessment and mock results, and the approach will be the same for all schools. Ofqual is working urgently with the exam boards to set out proposals for how this process will work.*
- *The exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead. To produce this, teachers will consider a range of evidence and data including performance in mock exams and non-exam assessment – clear guidance on how to do this fairly and robustly will be provided to schools and colleges. The exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, and use this information to produce a calculated grade for each student, which will be a best assessment of the work they have put in.*
- *We are **not** simply awarding students their predicted grades. There will be a fair process that looks at a broad range of evidence, including teacher assessment and prior attainment.*
- *Ofqual will consider carefully how to ensure the process is as fair as possible, which is likely to include considering measures that reflect how much progress a student would have been likely to have made at the school they are attending.*
- *If a student does not believe the correct process has been followed in their case they will be able to appeal. Also, if they do not feel their grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam, as soon as possible once schools open again. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021.*

So, because the finer details are not yet clear, teachers do not know precisely how the grades will be calculated. I am already working with the teachers of all Year 11 students and putting together evidence to support the awarding of the right grades, which reflect the effort and performance of your children up until this point.

The situation is far from ideal, but because of the closures, there really are very few options. I hope the process is fair and reasonable, and enables your son/daughter to access the logical next step in their education. As an academy, we will put pressure on the exam boards and Ofqual to make sure no-one is unfairly treated through this process.

Please **DO NOT CONTACT US** about your grades – and certainly do not contact your teachers about what grade they are going to submit for you. At this stage, they do not know, and I want them to concentrate on doing their jobs at this very difficult time.

That said, it is vital that students in Year 11 continue to work over the period of the closure – although this is not leading to any final GCSE examination, those students whose predicted grades are not currently an accurate reflection of the grades they are hoping to achieve will need to be able to show that they have accelerated their learning over this period. For some students who have not worked as hard as they can to this point, it is essential to step up learning so that, as an academy, we can have confidence in the grades we submit to the exam boards for consideration.

If students would like to donate any uniform, PE Kit or revision guides once the academy re-opens, we would be very grateful. We can organise for these to be collected once we are back up and running as normal.

If you have not yet submitted your application for college, and did not speak to Mrs Johnson in the few days before school was closed, could you please make sure you contact her via email to arrange for you to receive support?  
[jane.johnson@coopacademies.co.uk](mailto:jane.johnson@coopacademies.co.uk)

### **Prom and end-of-year festivities**

The prom has not yet been cancelled, but it is very likely that it is going to be, especially if restrictions remain in place around public gatherings, and the current COVID-19 virus does not disappear quickly.

Once we know the picture, we will look at holding an event at which Year 11 Leavers can come together and celebrate this important rite of passage. In the event that the prom is cancelled, any monies paid direct to the academy towards the event will be refunded.

Of course, it would be very disappointing if your child is not able to do what all Year 11 students usually do, and have a leavers' assembly. I am hoping we will be able to do something once the academy has re-opened, but you must appreciate that nobody knows for sure when that will be.

I know this is a time of great worry for you and your children, but we are all in completely uncharted territory. How the situation develops is totally uncertain, but I



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would finish this letter with a plea that you all do your bit to keep yourselves fit and healthy, and everyone else too.

It is important as the virus enters a critical phase, where infection risk is at its highest, that you take the necessary steps to prevent it from spreading more quickly.

Please follow governmental advice and stay indoors or away from people as much as possible. Whilst this is difficult, it is vital if we are to keep everyone safe. There are a great many people in the community who are vulnerable to infection, and will face severe problems if they contract the virus. The death and casualty rates in the UK are climbing rapidly, and this is because people are NOT listening to the advice that the government is issuing daily. If we all do as we are told, the risk is lower. I know I can count on your support to do what matters most.

I want all of our students and families to come out of this utterly horrific period of time intact and healthy, ready to face the challenge of moving on. With your support, I know we can help the fight against Coronavirus.

I wish you all well for the coming months. I will do my best to keep you updated as and when things are passed onto me.

In the meantime, my very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonny Mitchell'.

Jonny Mitchell  
Principal