

Dear Year 11 Parent/Carer

I am writing to keep you up to date with the assessment plans and other arrangements for Year 11 over the course of the year. You will no doubt be following the news closely around what is going to happen around the GCSE process in the summer.

Exams – what we know at this stage

From an announcement on Tuesday 12 October from the Department for Education (DfE):

The Prime Minister and Education Secretary are clear that exams will go ahead, as they are the fairest and most accurate way to measure a pupil's attainment.

Today (12 October), the government is announcing the summer exam series will start on 7 June and end on 2 July for almost all AS and A levels and GCSEs. One maths and one English GCSE exam will be held just before the May half-term, giving any year 11 pupils who are affected by COVID-19 the best possible chance of still sitting a paper in each of these core subjects.

Results days are Tuesday 24 August for A and AS levels and Friday 27 August for GCSEs so students will start the following academic year as normal.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

“Fairness to pupils is my priority, and will continue to be at the forefront of every decision we take in the lead up to exams next summer. 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.”

The full guidance from the DfE can be read her:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/students-to-be-given-more-time-to-prepare-for-2021-exams>

What we also know is that guidance can change and while there does not appear to be any plans to move to Centre Assessed Grades (as happened with Class of 2020) at this stage, this is something that we all need to prepare for none-the-less.

Minor changes have been made to some of the GCSE subjects including removing some of the content and/or removing some of the Non-Examined Assessments (NEAs – coursework) but most remain unchanged. Details of these changes have been shared with your child and can be found on our website in the Year 11 exam page.

Assessment data

The first report we will be sending to your child detailing progress in subject will be mid-November; subject teachers in departments will produce a 'working at grade' (WAG) based on in-class assessments and general work completed this term and an 'attitude to learning' (ATL) grade. We will not be sharing predicted GCSE grades at this time because our Year 11 students have not been back long enough for us to judge what that grade is likely to be. Our first predicted grades will be shared after the December mock exams when we issue a second round of progress data in January.

Mock Exams

These will go ahead in all subjects between 7 – 18 December (the last day of the autumn term).

Timetables were issued to students on the 14 October so we can give our students plenty of advance warning and so they can start devising a home study plan in preparation for these. As they were told in assembly, the purpose of the mock exams is to allow teachers to identify strengths and areas of development to help inform their planning and areas of focus in the lead up to the actual exams. By not preparing adequately for the mocks, this takes away the opportunity for pupils to get personalised feedback on their progress. Year 11 have also been told that while summer exams are going ahead at this stage, if this changes then mock exam data will be one of the key assessment pieces used to help teachers make fair and accurate Centre Assessed Grades if that is what we asked again to do by the government (this may be one of Gavin Williamson's contingency plans).

After-school revision sessions (success sessions) are on offer every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in core subjects: Science, English and Maths and we appreciate your support in encouraging your child to attend every week. We are getting on average just over half the year group and will not stop chasing them until we get 100%!

'Key to Success' evening event

Many parents attended our Year 10 'Key to Success' event in November 2019 and normally you would be invited to attend a further evening in Year 11 where Heads of Department outline key revision strategies specific to their subject and ways in which parents can support at home. While this will not go ahead in the conventional way, we will be sharing resources and advice remotely - when the dates and details of this are confirmed, I will be back in touch to let you know.

Careers guidance

As well as preparing for mock exams and GCSEs next summer, it is important that your child is preparing for next steps once they leave St Anne's. As a parent of a Year 11 student myself for the first time this year, the array of advice and guidance is quite bewildering but is a priority this term. Please find attached a thorough guide for parents about post-16 options, pathways, Labour Market Information, work based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships, employability and volunteering. It is an excellent reference guide for the options that are open to our students. In school, students will have a careers interview and the virtual college open days are being shared and watched in form time too. Students are missing out this year because all colleges have opted not to come in to deliver assemblies like they normally would and few are offering open events. There is a Careers Section on our website with all the guidance and Mrs Denton, our Careers lead regularly updates this with opportunities and information. The library is also open for drop-ins after school on Monday where she and our careers advisor from Change in Education, Amos is there until 4.30pm to give advice and to help with applications (most of these are done online now).

In final news, I shared with students that while we have a prom provisionally booked, it is looking unlikely that this will go ahead but we will be sharing information about leavers' hoodies – this pandemic is not going to take away all the good things! The resilience of your children continues to warm our hearts every day. They have coped with five months out of school and a national lockdown. They have adapted admirably to changes back in school in social time arrangements (resulting in a shorter lunch and restricted access around school), a further two weeks of remote learning out of school this term and as a result of staff absence (unavoidable in current times) learning in lessons without their regular teacher at times. For the most part, they have managed to keep a smile on their face through all this (though, it is difficult to tell when they are adhering so well to rules around wearing face coverings!). Young people are getting a lot of bad press at the moment but despite the adversity they are facing, they are simply 'getting on with it' at St Anne's, embodying our SACRED standards (Service, Ambition, Compassion, Respect, Equality and Determination).

If you have any questions around any of the content of the letter or anything else this year, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully,



Heather M Watts

Deputy Headteacher

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