



# ST CATHERINE'S COLLEGE

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

Our Ref: JHO/LFI/TMI/KGU/KPRO

17 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

We hope that the return to school has been welcome for everyone. It has certainly been a pleasure to see year 11 back in school. There has been a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the situation of the cancelled public examinations, and we wanted to say how incredibly well year 11 are doing to manage this and to keep going with their studies.

Further to our recent letter, we would like to take this opportunity to update you with the College's response to the [Government guidance](#), and in doing so, to outline our plan for the rest of the academic year for year 11. Key principles from the guidance which are informing our planning include:

- Teachers should determine the grades as late in the academic year as is practicable, and not be confined to a defined window, to enable teaching to continue for as long as possible.
- Teachers must assess their students' performance, using a broad range of evidence across the taught content, to determine the grade each student should receive.
- Grades should be based on teachers' assessments of the standard at which their students are performing.

## Assessment ongoing into summer term

There is much to be positive about in the way forward indicated by the Government and Ofqual statements, and it is very pleasing to see that schools will be centrally involved in assessing students' grades. What is clear, however, is that we need to maintain a high-level of teaching and learning, and to conduct ongoing internal assessments in order to continue to 'bank' assessment outcomes. This means that the key way forward is for us to plan opportunities for the students to show their knowledge of the course content and the skills acquired over the past three years at KS4.

## January mock exams

As year 11 will no doubt remember, lockdown commenced part way through their mock exams. In view of the on-going assessment model outlined above, we are not going to reschedule the completion of the series of mock exams. However, existing mock exam results will be considered by teachers as contributing evidence to the final grade. The Government is still consulting with schools on the evidence base for determining students' GCSE grades. We will keep you updated as this becomes clearer.

## What will be involved in the school assessments

Teachers will be carefully preparing assessments to ensure that students have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. The ongoing assessments will be:

- based upon a specific section of content known in advance by the students.
- time limited and completed within normal lesson time, where possible.
- conducted with the normal concessions applied where this is possible e.g. extra time / readers and scribes / use of a laptop. If this is not possible, the teacher will factor those concessions into their marking of the assessments.
- details of the schedules for assessments will be written in the pupil diaries giving at least a week's notice.

We will aim to ensure that the assessments are evenly spread as far as is possible. In between assessments, students will continue to be supported with revision lessons which prepare them for future assessments.

## Teaching new content

There will be limited teaching of new content in the majority of subjects, unless it is integral to a revision task; an upcoming assessment; or is critical to post-16 study. This will allow the maximum possible time in term 5 to review and revise previously taught material, and to continue building confidence in answering assessment questions. This is a good opportunity for all students to strive to achieve their full potential without the pressure of a single high-stakes GCSE examination.

In addition, Period 6 for year 11 will not be formally timetabled but may still be called upon for intervention purposes.

## Parents' evening

We thought it would be useful to hold a parents' evening in year 11 before the break for Easter. With this in mind, the evening will focus on where a student is making good progress and what areas need additional evidence to improve the final result. It is important to be clear from the outset, that teachers will not be able to discuss what grade they will be giving as a final result for each student but will be well placed to discuss ways and areas each student can improve between now and then. The date for the year 11 parents' evening will be Tuesday 30 March, after school, and will be a virtual event. Further details about how this evening will run will be shared next week.

## Use of laptops

A number of students have spoken to us about the possibility of using their own laptop during lessons and for the forthcoming assessments. We think this is a good idea and will help students to show their best work. With this said, it is important to note that the College cannot take responsibility for any laptop that is brought into College. We understand that there may be issues around battery charge for some laptops and we ask that they are fully charged before school. The class teacher will decide whether it is appropriate for laptops to be used in their subject area.

## Student well-being

We are aware that for many of our year 11 students, the past year has been one of uncertainty, worry and isolation. Please be assured that we have support available in school for our students and if you would like to access this for your child, please [complete the Wellbeing Form](#) and we will be in touch with you as soon as possible to discuss the best way of helping them through this time.

We hope that this letter provides you and your child with reassurance as well as the specific direction we are taking in relation to assessments.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support, and please be in touch if you have any questions at all.

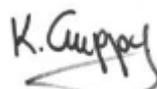
Yours faithfully



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