



7 January 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

### Re: GCSE and A Level Exams this Summer

Following Monday's announcement that GCSE and A Level exams are to be cancelled this summer, I want to update you on the current situation. Yesterday the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, announced in the House of Commons that GCSE and A Level students will receive teacher assessment grades in 2021. He also stated that grades will not be adjusted by an algorithm as they originally were in 2020, which can only be a good thing given the anguish that this caused many students last summer.

At this stage, we do not have any further details about how grades will be awarded. As soon as we get guidance we will carefully consider this and update you. It is very likely that the final outcome will involve teachers assessing performance using class and homework, coursework, assessments, examinations and other evidence. As I and Mrs Allen, Director of Sixth Form, have outlined in previous communications, I would like to emphasise 3 points:

1. Your hard work will be recognised. None of the effort you have shown so far, and will continue to show in the coming months, will be wasted. The new system will make sure this is fully reflected in your final grade.
2. In the long run, it won't matter your grades came via a different system – you will still be able to progress to Sixth Form, University and other destinations in the normal way. We fully understand that you will be anxious about securing places at future destinations and we are here to support you with this.
3. We will work tirelessly to ensure the new system is fair and balanced. Grades will be awarded based on objective evidence. Any grades that the school sets will be moderated carefully, to ensure they are consistent within and between schools.

**The key for now is to keep going; turn up to all your online lessons, keep working hard, and take care to complete work to the best of your ability.**

Mock examinations for Year 11s are not going to take place as planned, and whilst we realise this will be frustrating, we do strongly advise you to continue to follow advice from subject teachers, attempting all the work that is being set. As soon as we are in a position to provide an update on how we will proceed with these exams, we will of course inform you.

Although we completely understand that you will be keen to know how grades will be awarded, we must ask that you do not email teachers about the awarding of grades. We will not yet be able to give information about what assessments we will put in place to aid our judgements and we have no further



information than what is outlined in this letter. Last year it was considered malpractice if teachers were contacted about grading and we do not want to jeopardise any student grades.

We are acutely aware of how difficult this time is for our examination year groups. Please remember that there are support organisations that can help at this time. These include:

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/deal/deal-resources/emotional-health/>

<https://www.kooth.com/>

See also some general advice to support students who might be finding working at home particularly difficult, which we have posted on our website here:

<https://www.alderbrookschool.co.uk/well-being-advice/>

Please don't hesitate to contact us if any students are particularly anxious and in need of more direct support. Staff and external professionals can help students who need anything from a reassuring chat, to more ongoing emotional help at this time.

I thank you for your continued support and hard work, and I wish all students all the very best for the coming months,

With best wishes



**Tom Beveridge**  
Headteacher

