

24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

**Re: Sixth Form Qualifications**

As I am sure you are aware, there has been an update to the information issued by the government in relation to how grades will be applied for students in year 13 in place of this summer's exams.

While this information has started to address some of the questions that schools, parents and students have, there are still many aspects that have yet to be confirmed. Right now, there is a lot of information out there and not all of it is very clear so I hope that this letter clarifies the situation so far for you. I have listed below the key questions that many parents and students are asking and the current response to those:

**1. Will any type of exams be taking place this summer (i.e. if it is not a GCSE or A level exam, would it still be running)?**

The government has made it very clear that **all** types of exams are cancelled for this summer's examination season across all types of qualification.

**2. What if the school is able to open before the end of the summer term, will exams be scheduled then?**

Because there is no certainty of when we are able to re-open, exams will remain cancelled whether we are able to open again before the end of this academic year or not.

**3. How will my child's grades be calculated for the various subjects they study?**

While there is some initial guidance on this, at this point, schools don't know exactly how these grades will be calculated. The latest government guidance states clearly that students are **not** being awarded predicted grades. You may have seen contradictions to this in what has been reported in the media but this is taken directly from the most recent government guidance.

What we do know is that calculated grades will take into account a 'broad range of evidence' including non-exam assessment, teacher assessment, mock results, prior attainment data.

We do not yet know **how** this data will be used to calculate grades as Ofqual is currently working on this. The education secretary has clearly stated they want to make sure no student is unfairly disadvantaged by the change to how grades are allocated this year so there will be quite a bit of work to do for Ofqual and exam boards in conjunction with schools to establish how this will happen.

**4. Can subject teachers or the school give my son/daughter any idea of the grade they will be awarded?**

Unfortunately, this is not something we are able to do. Because we don't know how grades will be calculated, we have no way of knowing what their grade will be with any degree of certainty.

**5. When will schools know how these grades will be calculated?**

At this point, we don't know. It is of course a priority for all schools including Arnewood but we are having to be led by the government, Ofqual and the exam boards on this. There is quite a lot of work to be done to make this as fair and consistent a process as possible for all students so we don't expect this to be a quick decision. Once we know more, we will of course share this information with you.

**6. Is it true that my son/daughter can sit an exam next year? Do they have to do this? When will these exams take place?**

The government has stated that exams will be available next year for students who wish to sit them. They are optional. We do not yet know when these will take place as we cannot be certain when schools will reopen. We also do not yet know how these exams will be coordinated and will wait for further guidance on this.

**7. My son/daughter was working on a piece of non-exam assessment/coursework that was due in over the next couple of weeks. Should they complete it?**

If your son/daughter is able to complete this piece of work via distance learning by the deadline allocated then they should continue to do so. Where this work is not able to be completed via distance learning, there is no expectation that this should be completed. **This only applies to non-exam assessment/coursework that was being worked on at the time that the school closure came into effect.**

**8. Can my son/daughter improve pieces of non-exam assessment/coursework that they have already completed?**

No. The marks for these may already be submitted and the guidelines for the assessment of these pieces of work and submission of marks that apply every year, make clear that there cannot be improvements made to this type of work that could unfairly benefit some students over others.

**9. What if my son/daughter has started a piece of non-exam assessment/coursework that is unfinished but cannot be completed by distance learning (either because of the type of work that they are completing i.e. practical work, language oral assessments or because of lack of IT resources)?**

The government guidance states that exam boards will 'provide advice to schools and colleges as soon as possible' about this. Once we have this advice, we will share this with you and it is worth bearing in mind that from what is stated in the government guidance so far, this is not the only information that will be taken into account when calculating grades.

**10. Is there any additional pieces of work my son/daughter can complete that can be used to go towards their grade?**

No - other than any current pieces of non-exam assessment/coursework that can be completed via distance learning (see questions 7, 8 and 9 above). We do not yet know specifically what assessment information the government will request but it will need to be information we have for **all** students taking that qualification. Therefore, a student completing additional work that has not been set and assessed for all students before now, cannot be factored into what we send through to exam boards and Ofqual.

**11. Should my son/daughter continue to complete the work set for them by their teachers online?**

We want to ensure that all year 12 and 13 students are as best placed as possible in terms of their knowledge and understanding when they start their next steps into year 13 and from A level, to whatever they may be. What they learn now will help to prepare them for these next steps and in the event that they may wish to sit an exam next year in this subject, will have kept their knowledge and understanding up to date so we recommend that students complete work that has been set.

**Further information can be found by clicking on the link below:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

We know how hard your sons/daughters worked in preparing for their exams and that many students and parents will understandably be anxious about how grades will be allocated in place of summer exams. We are working with the information we have but at the moment, we are still waiting on further information from Ofqual and the exam boards to know exactly what information they want and how this will be used.

Please do be assured that when we have further information to share, we will update you as soon as we can. I hope you and your families are staying safe and well at this time.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Colman

Head of Sixth Form

Assistant Headteacher