



# The Arnewood School

11-19 Academy

**Working Together - Shaping Tomorrow**

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Our ref: NP

4<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

## **Re: Examinations Update and End of Term Arrangements Autumn 2020**

I am sure for many of us 2020 cannot come to an end soon enough!

Despite the challenges of the last 12 months I feel the school has flourished in adversity. Students returned in September keen to be with their friends and teachers. They were well supported by parents and carers, some of whom were themselves understandably anxious for their son/daughter's wellbeing once back at school. Although we have not escaped having to send some students home to self-isolate, on the whole we have so far fared better than most, and remained open throughout. Staff have reached deep and once again gone the extra mile – they are the backbone of what makes a great school. Consequently, students on the whole are catching up well. Our new Year 7 have found their feet and settled in brilliantly. Parents, students and staff have demonstrated their resilience and adaptability in embracing new ways of working – virtual open evenings, online consultation evenings, and presentation evenings by mail. Who would have thought this time last year we would all be so comfortable wearing face masks and squeezing hand gel every lesson?

### Examination Update

I have been delighted with the mature way in which Year 11 students have approached recent mock examinations. For obvious reasons, we have taken care that this year that they will be marked against previously published examination mark schemes and internally moderated before students are given their grades. Should we be asked to issue centre assessed grades in the Summer of 2020 these mock exams will form part of the evidence base to support our decision on grades. Although they are a key piece of data, they will not be used in isolation. As you are perhaps aware, it is currently strongly anticipated that external examinations this summer will go ahead but in a modified format.

The BBC reports that the Department of Education has developed plans to ensure examination equality this summer. They suggest: -

The DfE says it has had "extensive engagement" with exams watchdog OfQUAL, exam boards and senior leaders across the education sector.

The measures mean: -

- more generous grading than usual, in line with results from summer 2020, so that this year's cohort is not disadvantaged
- students getting advance notice - at the end of January - of some topic areas covered in exams to focus revision
- exam aids - such as formula sheets - provided in some exams to cut down on the memorising required



- additional "backup" exams - to be held in July - to give students a second chance to sit a paper if they have to miss main exams or assessments due to illness or self-isolation
- and a new expert group, which will monitor variation in the impact of the pandemic on students across the country.
- in extreme cases, where a student misses all their papers, a teacher-assessed grade will be given.

We look forward to receiving further details in due course but hope in the meantime the steps set out above will reduce some of the uncertainty facing examination students this year both in Year 11 and the Sixth Form.

Arrangements for the End of Term

We shall be finishing school for Christmas at lunchtime on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December. Students will have a staggered finishing time following an afternoon tutor period. Take away bags will be available for students on free school meals to collect. Please see year group departure times below. School transport will run at the end of the day, departing at approximately 12.40.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Students Depart</b>
7	12.20
8	12.30
9	12.25
10	12.15
11	12.05
12/13	12.05

**Students return on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021** and must continue to follow staggered start and finish times as currently for the time being. This is because we currently remain in Tier 2 (see attached) and wish to remain vigilant with regards to the welfare of students and staff.

I hope you and your family enjoy a well-deserved break this Christmas. I look forward to seeing everyone safe and well in the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

*N. M. Pressnell*

N M. Pressnell  
**Headteacher**