



FAQ for Year 11 Students, Parents and Carers

- **When will GCSE examinations take place?**

At the time of writing, the Summer exams are expected to take place as normal, from mid May to the end of June (the 29th of June being the current cut off for contingency planning). The exams regulator, Ofqual, have recently consulted on a potential delay to the start of the Summer exams season which would see them finishing in July but, as yet, no decision has been communicated to us. We are, therefore, continuing to prepare students for a 'normal' exam season in the Summer of 2021.

- **How will exams be conducted in order to keep students safe?**

This year, exams will not only be subject to the regulations set down by the Joint Council for Qualifications, they will also be subject to the government guidelines and health advice at the time. Current advice includes sanitising desks and chairs before and after each exam session, ensuring invigilators can stand 2m away from the students and keeping the venue well ventilated.

It will be more important than ever that students remember to bring their own pens, pencils, ruler, calculator and other necessary equipment to each exam as these items cannot be shared/borrowed.

Students and invigilation staff will be briefed on the arrangements prior the exam season to ensure that all members of the academy community are kept safe.

- **Will students still be allowed to have access arrangements in examinations?**

Students with approved access arrangements will still have this support available to them in exams this academic year. We will be following the relevant government guidance at the time of the exams and ensuring health and safety are maintained within the framework of the exam regulations.

- **Will results from mock exams count this year?**

At the time of writing, all qualification results are to be awarded by students taking the relevant assessment for each subject. That means that students will take the appropriate exams and submit non-examined assessment (coursework) for each subject in order to achieve their grades.

Mock exams remain a valuable experience for students, allowing them to practise demonstrating what they know under timed conditions and as such should be undertaken with a conscientious and determined approach. The school will continue to hold mock exams at key points of the academic year alongside further low stakes assessment. Please see attached an overview for our assessment cycle for this academic year.

- **How might exams be different this year?**

To ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the disruption in their teaching, the exams regulator, Ofqual, are considering temporary amendments to the exam/assessment requirements for qualifications in each individual subject. This may mean that there is a reduction in topics studied or changes to the way in which non examined assessment is conducted. Changes are being notified to us direct from the individual awarding bodies and students will be prepared for exams/assessment in line with these revised requirements. Please see attached an overview of curriculum changes for each subject.

- **How will students be supported in preparing for their GCSE examinations?**

The school will be targeting additional catch-up money to support all year 11 students. This will include mentoring support, revision classes (both after school and in school holidays) and additional tutoring; the school has applied for additional tutoring support through the National tutoring programme. The school is also sourcing a range of motivational resources and speakers; including inviting alumni back to the school to speak with students to both reassure and inspire. The school has a comprehensive support package in place to both challenge and support our students at this vital time.

- **How will students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) be supported through the year?**

Although the legal duties to Education, Health and Care Plans have been temporarily lifted during lockdown and stand to be reinstated in September 2020, we continue to provide emotional, practical and academic support for children with SEND. The SEND team works alongside teachers to identify areas of difficulty and work methodically to overcome them. We have a large team that serve as advocates for people that often have limited voice in the care and support. We will work with families to ensure that no child falls behind.

- **How will children of greater disadvantage (eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant) be supported this year?**

The full Pupil Premium Grant action plan is available from the school website. To summarise, we use the additional funding to support the development of high quality teaching whilst supporting the emotional development of individual students through a broad range of pastoral support. We also continue to support students in Key Stage 4 with the financial implications of purchasing revision resources.

- **How will we be able to communicate with our child's subject teacher?**

The school is looking at how we can use technology to ensure you have the opportunity to communicate with all your child's subject teachers. Further information will follow in regards how this will be structured. However, we can assure you that an opportunity will be provided on 4th February 2021. You will also receive an update on their academic progress during w/c 2nd November 2020.

What are the key dates?

- End of October Half Term - First round of assessments to have taken place
- 4th November 2020 - First progress report to go home.
- End of Autumn Term - Data capture and analysis of pre-mock data
- First two weeks of January 2021 - Formal mock examinations to take place for all subjects.
- 15th January - Data capture and mock analysis.
- 18th January - Mock Results Day
- 20th January - Second progress report to go home.
- 4th February – Parents' Evening
- Week Commencing Monday 1st March - Third round of progress assessments
- 22nd March - Third report to go home
- 30th March - National data received on March mocks (PiXL)
- 10th May - Final report