

Headteacher: Thomas Maltby BA (Hons), MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Nicola Mayhew

15th October 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome to my first Year 11 letter of the academic year. We have all been impressed with the focus and mature attitude that the students have arrived back at school with, especially given the potential for uncertainty and worry back in September. I wish to take this opportunity now to discuss a few different concerns that I have been made aware of.

October Assessments

Students are sitting assessments in all their subjects before October half term. We have planned for these to allow staff, and students, to be aware of any gaps that exist in knowledge. I have heard them referred to as 'mocks' and some students are worried that these will be used as their grades, should we head into another major lockdown. These are not the mock exams; mock examinations will be taking place when we return to school in January 2021; you will, of course, receive further information regarding these nearer the time. However, I must advise that any assessed piece of work could inform a teacher's judgement of a current working grade and, thus, a predicted grade. Therefore, it is important that students approach these with the same level of diligence which they would apply to any other important assessment or exam. The decision to hold these assessments after a period of time back in school was made so as to avoid putting students through exams as soon as they returned, potentially increasing anxiety at an already fraught time.

Revision and Preparation for Exams

I know that many will be working hard already on preparing themselves for the upcoming October assessments detailed above. It is our recommendation that students have a well-planned revision timetable in which they divide their time into half hour chunks per subject. It is well proven that revising single subjects for large periods of time is an inefficient way of ensuring knowledge is placed into long-term memory. Students may wish to engage with parents and carers at home to test them on their revised material. Flashcards with questions on one side and answers on the other are a good way of testing superficial learning, for example.

Post-16 Applications

Several students have asked when predicted grades will become live on Go4Schools because they want to make their Post-16 college applications. Given the time staff and students have had away from school, we have delayed collecting and publishing this information until after the first round of assessments. I have personally checked with colleges and my understanding is that students have a good amount of time in which to complete their applications. Predicted grades will be live on G4S by the end of the first week back after half term.

Looking ahead to next year, we are now able to confirm that GCSE exams will be taking place between 7th June and 2nd July, although one exam will be taking place before half term in English and maths.

As always, if you have any concerns over anything to do with your child in this most important of years, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Mr P Hart

Assistant Headteacher