



26 March 2020

Dear Year 11 Students and Families

In this very uncertain time, the announcement last week regarding exams has added even more uncertainty for students in Year 11 and their parents and carers.

We understand that we will be getting more guidance about how the results will be decided at some point during the middle of next week. Whilst there are many unknowns, I didn't want to wait until next week to give you some advice based on what we know so far.

The government announced that exams will not take place this summer. They have given some initial guidance about how grades will be awarded. Please see some relevant text from this announcement below:

Ofqual will develop and set out a process that will provide a calculated grade to each student which reflects their performance as fairly as possible, and will work with the exam boards to ensure this is consistently applied for all students. The exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead.

To produce this, teachers will take into account a range of evidence and data including performance on mock exams and non-exam assessment – clear guidance on how to do this fairly and robustly will be provided to schools and colleges. The exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment, and use this information to produce a calculated grade for each student, which will be a best assessment of the work they have put in.

Ofqual and exam boards will be discussing with teachers' representatives before finalising an approach, to ensure that it is as fair as possible. More information will be provided as soon as possible.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced>

As you will see from the announcement above, teachers' grades will need to be based on mock exams and other assessment evidence. It is highly likely that this will need to be school-based assessment to ensure validity and, accordingly, any work students would want to submit from home now will almost certainly be inadmissible. Please, therefore, do not send work in to teachers to assess.

Equally, please do not contact teachers about predicted grades as they have no more information as yet as to precisely what will be asked for (and what evidence might need to sit behind these).

It has been alleged that GCSE results will be made available to students before the end of July. GCSE results could, potentially, be made available much earlier than the normal late August results day owing to the fact the usual marking of exam scripts, which takes a substantial period of time after the exams are completed in June, will not need to take place this year.

The government has also suggested that there will be an opportunity for those not happy with their GCSE results, or because they would like to sit an exam in the subject after studying it for two years, to sit their exams early in the new academic year or next summer. Unfortunately, we do not know any more details yet on what these arrangements would look like, when these exams would be or for whom they might be appropriate.

We would advise, however, that students wanting to do these exams (and I appreciate you might not know that yet because you don't have your results!), should continue to revise for their exams as they had planned to even if they will be taken at a later date. I do appreciate that this is not an easy thing to do but I wanted to be clear that it might be a possibility for those wishing to do so. Luckily, all of the content for all of your courses is in the Master Revision Guide. Please do use this to help you as it is an invaluable resource, particularly at this time.

We would also advise that students planning to go on to study A levels continue to self-study in and look at the specifications for the subjects in which they are interested; keeping good study habits going can only be a good thing! At some point, when schools and Sixth Form Colleges re-open, I am sure they will be happy to provide pre-course reading for you. Equally, for those considering a college course or apprenticeship, please email the college or apprentice provider and ask for advice on what could be done to prepare for these courses.

Some students may still be unclear as to what they are doing from September. The Leadership Team and Helen Richardson, our Careers Advisor, are currently planning, in these changing times, how we can best support those who need some final careers advice. We will be in touch with more information shortly for those students who need it. Do please email Helen Richardson on helen.richardson@icknield.oxon.sch.uk if you have any concerns.

We are sorry that we can't give you much more certainty on things at the moment, but will be in touch with any updates as soon as we have them.

We hope that this advice gives a little more clarity on what is currently a very murky picture.

Thank you for your patience and we hope that you are all well.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Mat Hunter
Headteacher