

Ref: GWA/LWO

7 January 2021



Dear Y11 Families and Students

### **Y11 examinations update**

I am sure you will be getting fed up with messages from me so please accept my apologies in advance but I do feel the need to try to offer some reassuring words in light of yesterday's announcement that the Summer examination series has been cancelled. The video to accompany this message can be found [here](#).

Less than a week ago I was expecting all Y11 and Y13 students to be returning to school in a few days time. Earlier this week, we began an exercise in mass testing of students and staff which is now abruptly halted. On Monday, it was right for children to be in school; on Tuesday it wasn't! It is difficult for us to plan when the goal-posts are moving on an almost daily basis and I appreciate your understanding in respect of that ongoing uncertainty. What follows, therefore, is inevitably subject to change depending on the virus and further national pronouncements but should at least give you a sense of where we are heading.

### **It's not all doom and gloom - honest!**

Unlike many schools we already have one set of Y11 mock results recorded from the examinations that were completed in December. Many Y11 students across the country would have been coming back to mock exams this week and next which will now not be taking place. Our own, pre-Christmas, internal mock exams were implemented in exactly the same way as external GCSE exams and your young adult would have felt as though they were doing the real thing. Those of us involved in the administration of those exams were impressed with the way in which students conducted themselves. Indeed, their approach from September has been most commendable. It is typical for GCSE students to improve markedly between Christmas and the summer and we still expect to see that happen

**Another set of formal Mock Examinations across all subjects will be held in the Summer Term. ALL students, therefore, have a target to work towards. These exams results will act as one contributory factor towards the Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) that will, at the very least, help to inform final grades.**

Unlike last year, a national decision has been made significantly earlier to cancel summer exams and the strong likelihood is that all Y11 students will return to school at some point unlike last year.

**Y11 students will, therefore, have the opportunity to complete practical assessments and showcase their many skills and talents in music, song, drama, sport, catering, design technology, art etc. These skills will also help inform Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) in a fuller way than was possible last year. Some CAGs will thus be enhanced by the opportunity for these outstanding talents to be demonstrated.**

Unlike last year, there will be no algorithm applied to try to make fair results across centres. This proved a disaster last year and, whilst my confidence in the Department for Education and Ofqual is not at an all time high, I genuinely do not think they can possibly get it quite so wrong this time around!

**The strong likelihood is that results will come out earlier than last year. We may, after all, not be having to wait for external marking and moderation processes to take place. Thus, planning and support for**

Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury  
Gloucestershire GL20 8DF

Reception: **01684 292152**  
Attendance Line: **01684 851806**

Email: **office@tewkesburyschool.org**  
Website: **www.tewkesburyschool.org**

Headteacher: **Mr G M Watson** BSc PGDip NPQH

**progression into our own Sixth Form, to colleges such as Hartpury and Gloscol and to work-based apprenticeships will be more comprehensive.**

**Those stopping on to Tewkesbury School Sixth Form will benefit from additional learning time and preparation as a result of summer exams being cancelled.**

Y11 students this year have lost more learning time than the year group that preceded them. They must, therefore, continue to apply themselves fully. Last year's GCSE students all went on to appropriate pathways and, nationally, students benefited from perhaps higher than expected results as CAGs tended to be more generous than exam results would have been.


To finish, a Centre Assessed Grade, will be based on a whole host of factors including the results of two sets of mock exams, practical assessments and coursework, in-year assessments and tests. **The message for your son/daughter is that everything is still to play for and they should approach our own internal exams planned for the summer term as if they were their real GCSEs.**

Y11 students are doing well, they have adopted a more mature approach to their studies than previous cohorts and clearly recognise the direct impact on their schooling of the global pandemic and the lost learning that they have experienced.

I think that is all that I need to share at this point but am happy to respond to any questions you may have. All of the above is clearly dependent on the trajectory of the virus and any decisions made outside of our own control.

I hope that at least you gain a degree of comfort from those words and, if not, do get in touch.

With sincere best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. M. Watson', written in a cursive style.

**Mr G M Watson**  
**Headteacher**