

23 March 2020

Dear Year 11, 12 and 13 students and parents/carers

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Special information for Year 11, 12 and Year 13 Examination Students

We hope this finds you well and coping as best as you can under the current circumstances. Parents / Carers, please send our best regards to your children who coped admirably and behaved impeccably on their last day at school on Friday, in spite of their deep disappointment.

We fully appreciate you may be feeling confused and disappointed about the decision to cancel this year's examinations. The guidance from the government is still not complete however we do know they will be looking at some form of professional judgement with evidence to support this decision. Regarding the assessment of A Levels and GCSEs this summer, Ofqual (the exam boards regulator) has announced that schools will be asked to submit a grade that reflects what teachers feel individual students would have achieved, had they sat the exams this summer. These teacher predictions will take into account mock exam results, non-exam assessment and coursework as well as the teachers' professional opinions as to the likely outcome a student would have achieved in the summer.

Once they have received this information, the exam boards will then combine the teacher prediction with other factors to reach a final grade. These other factors will include the student's prior attainment and grade distribution from previous years (i.e. nationally they would want to award similar numbers of grade 9s, 8s etc. at GCSE or A grades, B grades etc. at A-level as had been achieved in previous years). The students will then be awarded these grades before the end of July, with the certificates they receive being no different from any other year (i.e. future employers will not know they did not sit exams).

Students, please be assured the school will be completely fair with these and we understand many of you may be panicking because you feel you didn't work hard enough or reach your full potential during your mock examinations and that you would have done much better in the real examinations. This will all be taken into account. Your teachers are very experienced at this and we will ensure that no student is disadvantaged. Owing to this change by the government we will not be releasing Year 11 and 13 reports. We now need to spend more time on ensuring our professional judgements are absolutely fair and robust.

Please find below a link to the full press release from the Department for Education on Friday 20th March.

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

We share the deep feelings of disappointment for our students, staff and of course you their parents, whom we know have worked so hard to prepare for the A Level and GCSE exams. The teacher assessment system outlined by the DfE and Ofqual leaves many questions unanswered and will clearly require more detail. We are confident that Ofqual and the exam boards will work with us to do everything possible to ensure grades are awarded fairly and consistently in these difficult circumstances.

We hope we can count on your support in respecting the system that has been put in place and our professional judgement and knowledge of the children.

We respectfully ask parents and students not to request their grades from their teachers - the school cannot be put under pressure to amend a child's grade if it goes against our professional judgement. We will be bound to comply with the regulations and as is always the case every year, any teacher assessed work which is sent to the exam board can be altered by exam boards and the government will be statistically ensuring that grades this year will not go **significantly down or up across the country**. This is called 'norm referencing'. Students will be allowed to appeal their final grade awarded by the exam board at the appropriate point in July/August and they will also have the opportunity to sit the exam, we believe very early in the next academic year if they are still not happy with their grade.

Our advice at this stage is that **if possible, you should complete any coursework for any subject** which would have counted towards your assessment as it is highly likely that will be called up as evidence. This will only affect a few subjects. At this stage we are also recommending that you continue to do the work set for all of your subjects as many courses are not quite finished and to not do so may leave you at a disadvantage should you decide to sit the exam in September if you are not happy with your final grade. The work your teachers have already set will be particularly useful if you hope to continue studying these subjects post-16. After Easter we will be continue to set a variety of extended work which will be useful to prepare yourselves for post 16 courses or university study.

As soon as we now more we will let you know.

We do understand that you are likely to have more questions regarding the assessment process, however for the moment we have shared with you all the information that we currently have. As a result, we would ask that at present you do not contact the school to request further information about your child's grades and rest assured that as soon as we know more, we will be in touch. Thank you for your understanding.

We will continue to communicate with you regularly. I know there will be a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety during this time. Thank you for your continued support, stay safe and well and best wishes to your families from all of us at Rooks Heath College.

Yours sincerely



Mrs M Manderson
Headteacher