

24 March 2020



— THE —
ELMGREEN

Dominic Bergin BA(Hons) NPQH
Headteacher

Dear Families

I am writing to update you on the position in relation to GCSE and A Level examinations for this academic year.

In an effort to keep you up to date with the latest government directives and information concerning the assessment of GCSE and A Levels this summer, I have summarised what we know to date. The government's regulatory organisation Ofqual is working with the exam boards and teachers' representatives before finalising what guidance they submit to schools. They have confirmed they will use teacher assessments to provide calculated grades for students this year with the aim to release grades to students before the end of July.

They have said that exam boards will "ask teachers to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead" and that "teachers should consider evidence including performance on mock exams and non-exam assessment". The exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including student's 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. In addition to this they have said that they "aim to ensure that the distribution of grades follows a similar pattern to that in other years, so that this year's students do not face a systematic disadvantage as a consequence of these extraordinary circumstances." What this means is they will take into account schools previous performance when deciding the overall balance of grades for the year group.

With this in mind we would ask if Year 11 and 13 students have coursework or assignments at home, this **must** submit this via Google Classroom or email it to the class teacher. We cannot overemphasise how important this is as this is one of the elements they will be judged on. If this is in the physical form of sketchbook, folder or if it is printed this can be delivered to the school reception after the Government has lifted the ban on travel. Please ensure that all work is clearly labelled and for the attention of the subject teacher. Once we have the final official guidance from Ofqual we will use previous data and ask Subject Teachers with the evidence they have before them to produce a calculated grade which, as stated previously, will be a best assessment of the work.

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If students do not believe the correct process has been followed when the grades are awarded at the end of July then they can appeal. If students feel that their calculated grade does not reflect their performance they can choose to sit an exam either when the schools reopens or in summer 2021. In light of this we believe that students in both year groups should continue studying so that they are in a position to sit exams in the future should they wish to do so. In addition, we also want to ensure the students are in the best position from which to start the next stage of their education. Sixth Forms, Colleges and Universities will want students to have acquired a certain level of knowledge and have revised appropriately; not to have done this may place students at a significant disadvantage as they attempt to make what is already a challenging transition to more advanced study. Mr Arnett and Ms West will be in touch with students and families in due course.

We are in unprecedented times and are acutely aware that this is a very stressful and anxious time for both students and families as so much hard work, focus and commitment has gone into these past two years. However, the focus for students and families must be to stay indoors and keep safe and healthy. Please submit any outstanding work electronically to your teachers or drop it at school reception when it is deemed safe by the Government. We want you to know we will continue to be here to support you and do our very best for you.

Yours faithfully

Aidan Ryan
Deputy Headteacher

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