



March 27<sup>th</sup> 2020

Dear Parents and Carers of Year 11 Students,

Firstly thank you for your patience this week while we have been making sense of the information that has been issued regarding the cancellation of Year 11 examinations this Summer. We have been advised that OFQUAL, the body that regulates all qualifications and assessments, will be issuing detailed guidance next week on how final grades will be awarded for students in years 11 and 13. In the interim, we have been carefully considering

- i) what advice and guidance we can provide with confidence at this stage, while still waiting for more details from OFQUAL.
- ii) what programme of learning and support we can usefully offer to Year 11 students.

### **Guidance on Final Grades**

#### **1. What we know:**

- The Government has committed to a fair process that will ensure students are not disadvantaged as a result of cancellation of the Summer examinations.
- Our school has committed to supporting this process and ensuring we also ensure no students are disadvantaged as a result of the cancellation of Summer examinations and the closure of the school during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Students will be issued a final grade by examination boards. A process is being designed by OFQUAL to use school final forecasts combined with a whole range of other data. Schools will only be involved in providing final forecasts, we will not be given any say in the process to determine final grades.
- Students are to have the opportunity to take examinations in the Autumn Term or Summer 2021. These opportunities are provided for students who dispute their final grades, for those who wish to improve on the grade they were expecting this Summer and for those who simply wish to give themselves the opportunity to demonstrate what they can do in an examination process.

#### **2. What we are doing:**

- We are waiting for guidance on final forecasts and preparing to issue these when needed. They will be based on professional judgements of teachers about the grade they predict students would have achieved if able to benefit from attending lessons, using the support and intervention available and making the progress we would expect between now and their examinations. Teacher's professional judgement will be based on what students have demonstrated they can achieve from across their classwork, coursework, school assessments and examinations. Single poor exam results or test results will not disadvantage students: the forecast is based on a rounded picture of the child. These forecast grades are not yet completed and we are awaiting guidance on what we will be able to share with you once they are finalised. Staff are instructed not to share any information on final forecast grades and will not be able to answer any queries from parents/carers or students about specific grades at this time. We can continue to provide our January forecasts to support any college applications but must advise you these are not necessarily going to be your child's final forecast grades.

- We are setting up a portal with advice and guidance for students who wish to keep working towards Autumn 2020 or Summer 2021 examinations. This will contain key resources for your child to continue with independent learning. Materials will be available next week for English, Maths, Science, History and Geography. Subject to demand we can support in other subjects after the Easter break.
- We are setting up a separate portal for students who are progressing to sixth form, either here at Colmers or with another provider. The portal will contain bridging units for students to be working on A'level content. We can only offer this for subjects that are available in our own sixth form and all students are welcome to access this.
- We are compiling a list of alternative learning opportunities for any student who does not intend to take any further GCSE examinations and is not progressing to A'levels. This will be full of interesting and exciting on-line courses that might be of interest, opening minds and keeping folk occupied during the weeks ahead!
- Mr Bennett is creating a support and well-being programme to keep the year group connected during the school closure. This will be launched on Monday March 30<sup>th</sup>.
- We are being asked by many students to provide forecast grades for college applications: these will be the January Forecast grades as issued in students' January Reports, which may not be the same as their final forecasts. Colleges are familiar with students providing these forecasts and understand that they are subject to change during the course of Year 11.

### 3. Coursework for Vocational and GCSE Subjects

- We do not have any guidance yet from exam boards on how they will deal with incomplete coursework units. At this time, we encourage students who wish to continue upgrading coursework that this cannot disadvantage them. However, we do not yet know whether we will be permitted to accept work done at home given that it has not been completed under conditions for controlled assessments. Any student who wishes to do more work on units for BTEC awards or GCSE coursework components has our full support and encouragement. We believe we will be in a better position to provide more detailed guidance on this next week, anything students manage to do in the interim can only be positive.
- Individual teachers will make contact with their classes next week to advise on any specific work that they think students might helpfully continue at home.

I appreciate this is a difficult time to be so uncertain about what is happening next. I think it is vital we reassure all of our young people that the Government has committed to ensuring they are not disadvantaged and as a school, we are 100% behind that commitment. I imagine this letter will leave you with some unanswered questions, it is certainly challenging to adapt to such rapid changes without any more information on how the new processes will work. I hope you understand that we will continue to update you when we have further information. In the meantime if you have questions that you think I may be able to answer, or concerns that I may be able to help with, then do please email me and I will do my best!

Yours sincerely,



Emma Leaman  
Headteacher