



# Hebburn Comprehensive School

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DRT/KM

Head Teacher: Mr D R Thompson

21 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope all families are safe and well.

I just wanted to provide you with an update from my last newsletter.

## Year 11

Following the Secretary of State's announcement on 6 January to cancel exams, we understand that it is an uncertain and anxious time for pupils in Year 11.

In my letter dated 7 January, I said that it was extremely important that all pupils continued working and engaging fully in their studies because we would be using a range of information to arrive at final grades. I also mentioned that, at that stage, we had not been given any guidance from the government on how the process was going to work.

On Friday 15 January, Ofqual, the exams' regulator, published a consultation document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/consultation-launched-on-2021-exam-replacement>

on how 2021 could look for students and learners. This consultation is due to end on 29 January. Unfortunately, we will not know how grades will be determined until the consultation process has ended. I am hoping that the outcome will be published in early February, so we are able to provide you with more concrete information. What we do know, however, is that current work is extremely important, and I stress the need to engage fully and complete all work set by teachers during this period of school closure.

I know that there have been some queries about both mock and predicted grades, with college interviews currently taking place. The school is in discussion with post-16 providers about this because we do not feel it is possible to provide accurate predicted grades under the current circumstances, as we do not know the criteria against which grades will be determined. We also feel that, whilst mock exams gave a snapshot of progress at that time, they were taken after a period of significant disruption to pupils' learning, which continued in the Autumn Term, and is highly unlikely to give a true reflection of how actual grades will look in the summer. Mock grades are traditionally lower than actual outcomes in August.

The post-16 providers that I have had communication with say that pupils should research current qualifications, examining the course requirements very carefully, to ensure the course is right for the individual. It would be sensible to seek advice from the school about the appropriateness of the course. For example, if your son/daughter was considering studying maths at 'A Level', a discussion could take place with the school about whether this was a suitable option based on previous work and ability.

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After discussion, your son/daughter could apply for the place, but this is on the understanding that any offer by the post-16 provider would, in most cases, be conditional, as is the case every year. Whether the final grade met entry requirements is down to the individual establishment. If the college or 6<sup>th</sup> Form wanted to seek further clarification about the appropriateness of the qualification for an individual before making their conditional offer, they can contact the school, but a precise predicted grade could not be given. Post-16 providers emphasise that advice and guidance about courses are the most important things at this stage.

I hope parents and carers will appreciate that it is difficult to provide information when a process has not been decided or completed. What I can say is that we will conduct a rigorous and fair process in school, based on teachers' expertise, as we did last year and taking account of the range of criteria which will be directed by Ofqual.

As in normal years, final grades will not be shared until they are released in the summer.

Yours sincerely



Mr D R Thompson  
**Head Teacher**