



Thursday, 26 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As you will be aware, events moved with such speed at the end of last week that it was impossible to properly say goodbye to both our Year 11 and Year 13 students. This is not the way that we would have chosen for them to end their school careers and I feel huge sympathy for their situation. I hope that you are all able to remain safe and well at home and I would strongly endorse all of the social distancing warnings that have been issued by the government.

I am sure that you will be very anxious to hear details of how A level and GCSE/CNAT students may be awarded grades for examinations that they should have taken this summer.

We will offer every support to our students in the next stage of their career whether that is progression to sixth form, college, apprenticeships, employment or university entrance. We will give more details of a planned online counselling and advice service when it becomes available. No student should be disadvantaged by the current circumstances – all schools, colleges, universities and providers are committed to this principle.

Please find some comfort in the fact that all students across the UK are in the same position and we are committed at Waseley Hills to making sure that our young people are not disadvantaged in any way. We are lucky to have had two such excellent year groups who would have done very well in examinations on their own account.

The government has provided some clarification on how qualifications and grades will be awarded. If you follow the link below it is self-explanatory but the situation is moving quickly and changing every day.

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

It may be useful to summarise the key points;

- Teachers will be asked to make a judgement on the grade they believe students would have achieved if they had sat all exams and completed the course as normal. This judgement will inform the grade they are awarded for their subjects. Importantly, teachers will be able to base the judgement on a wide range of evidence and not just the most recent mock exam results. This means that assessments, essays, classwork and homework etc. can all be taken into account. This also means that the predicted grade teachers recorded on any previous progress reports may potentially differ from the final grade they suggest should be awarded. Teachers will do everything they can to ensure students achieve the grades that they were on track to achieve at the time of closure.

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- Our teachers are currently working hard whilst not in school to assemble this portfolio of evidence as it will be sampled by awarding bodies. It would greatly help us if students made sure they had all of their work together including practical work from Art and Design subjects in case it is called for.
- The plan is for examination boards to inform the students of the grades they have been awarded during July 2020; this is much earlier than normal.
- An appeals process will be put into place if students feel that the grades awarded do not sufficiently reflect what they feel they would have achieved had they sat their exams as normal. At the moment we do not have any information about how this process will work.
- Students will be awarded the full A level, CNAT and GCSE qualifications and will eventually receive certificates as normal. The value of these qualifications will be no different to those awarded to students in previous years.

There are a couple of points that I would want to raise now but we will have more clarification on how qualifications will be awarded in the coming weeks.

Firstly, the completion of any coursework that teachers may require at home is vital now that we know that their judgement will be used to inform the final grades this is particularly important to subjects such as Cambridge National courses and Art and Design courses.

Please avoid contacting teachers in school at present about suggested awarded grades. Our teachers are working hard on behalf of our students. We always have the best interests of our students at heart and our teachers will need time to reflect on the wealth of assessment information before making the final judgement. Teachers of course must be able to access the evidence in order to award a grade and we will contact you if we need anything from you.

The government has put together a document of the frequently asked questions about exams and you can find it at the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

There is very little we can add at this point but simply to reassure students and parents that we will do our very best for them at this difficult time and ensure that we communicate information about examinations as and when we receive it.

Please ensure that students don't give up on the studies that require completion and keep all books, past papers, assessment materials and any home learning safe and secure, so these can be called upon if/when necessary.

If you have any specific questions please could you send them to the office@waseleyhills.worcs.sch.uk email inbox and we will be in touch with any further updates.

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In the meantime, stay safe and continue to follow guidance from government departments and the NHS.

Yours sincerely

A. W. Roll

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Headteacher**

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