



TO CARE
TO LEARN
TO ACHIEVE

BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL
A Specialist Business and Enterprise College
with Applied Learning
Headteacher: Mrs H J Phillips

8 January 2021

Dear Year 11 Students & Parents/Guardians

Exams and Qualifications

Firstly, I would like to wish you a Happy New Year. Let's hope 2021 is better than 2020! I hope you are well. It is disappointing that most students are not with us in school at the moment. However, we are looking forward to welcoming students back in school as soon as it is possible.

GCSEs

I am writing to provide you with an update on the latest position. As you probably know, earlier this week, the government announced that the **GCSE exams planned for the summer will not go ahead**. Please do not worry. **Students will still be awarded grades and qualifications**. However, instead of sitting exams, Exam Boards will award grades based on evidence submitted by the school. Schools have not been provided with details regarding how this will work. The Department for Education is expected to provide more information during the next few weeks. We will, of course, keep you updated.

Whilst the precise details are not yet clear, we do know that grades will be awarded based on the standard of the work produced by each student in each subject. It is likely that a range of evidence will be considered including; classwork, homework, coursework (in some subjects) and performance in practice exams. This will include work you have completed throughout the course, and work you complete in the time remaining.

Please be aware that individual teachers are unable to add to the information I have provided in this letter. **Please do not ask teachers what grades are likely to be awarded in the summer**. I understand why you may wish to ask this question, but it is unfair to expect teachers to speculate before they know how the system will work. It is also worth noting that, when the exams were cancelled in 2020, schools were not allowed to share the grades they had submitted with students or parents before Results Day in August. It is possible that this may also be the case in 2021.

Vocational Qualifications

Some students are following Non-GCSE vocational courses in subjects such as Business, Media, Sport and Child Development. The government has not yet cancelled exams in these courses. At the moment, it is being left to schools to decide whether these exams go ahead. At Bedford, we have decided that any vocational exams that were scheduled to take place in January will not go ahead. In the current circumstances, the health and safety of students, families and staff has to be a priority. However, please be assured that students will not be disadvantaged in any way by this. They will still be awarded a grade based on other evidence.

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Keep Learning!

It is important that students continue to learn during the remainder of Year 11. Hopefully it soon becomes safe enough to resume face to face learning in school. In the meantime, students must engage with remote learning provided by teachers. We all know that learning from home is not the same as being in school. However, the teachers are working hard to provide the best remote learning possible. Students must join Zoom lessons, complete work set, and stay in touch with teachers via email. It is in the students' best interests to do this. Work completed will be used as part of the evidence for awarding grades. **If students engage with learning and work hard, it will help to boost the grades they achieve.** If students do not engage properly, it will reduce their chances of achieving good grades. However, whilst qualifications and grades are important, education is about more than this, so we need staff, students and parents/guardians to work together to ensure that the remainder of year 11 is completed as well as possible in the circumstances.

Well-Being

Nothing is more important than the well-being of students. Schools play an important social role in the lives of many young people, so we appreciate that this may be a difficult time for some. However, although most students are not able to physically attend school at the moment, staff are still here to help. Students should maintain regular contact with their form tutor, and should not hesitate to contact school staff if they need any support. We will always try our best to help.

We will keep you updated of any developments over the coming weeks.

Yours faithfully



Mr P Shelton
Deputy Head