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Headteacher: Mrs Emma Anderson

Chair of Governors: Mr Steve Chew

Our ref: CK/RCY

22 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

At the end of another week I hope you and your family are well and coping during these uncertain and challenging times. Our overwhelming priority as a school is to ensure that your child receives a first class education and is supported to achieve their very best. We have previously written to you to detail the recent announcements from the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, around the cancellation of GCSE examinations and the information we currently have about how your child's grades will be awarded in the summer. Below is an update on GCSE and BTEC examinations and other key messages relevant to you and your child.

GCSE and BTEC Examinations

At the time of writing this letter the Education Secretary had also written to the Chief Regulator at Ofqual asking for a consultation to begin on the alternative arrangements for GCSE examinations that would involve grades based on teacher assessment. This consultation launched on Friday 15 January 2021 and runs for two weeks. As soon as we receive further guidance on the expectations for teacher assessment of your child's grades we will communicate these to you. Our priority is, and always has been, ensuring that all students acquire the knowledge they need to have a smooth transition into the next stage of their education and have the opportunities and choice they deserve.

Alongside the launch of this consultation, recognition was given to the fact that students taking vocational, technical and other general qualifications (VTQs) should not be disadvantaged in comparison to their peers taking GCSEs. Consequently, it has been deemed that it is not viable for written external examinations in February and March to take place. This will affect students studying Enterprise and Health & Social Care who have been preparing to sit these examinations. They will no longer take place.

During the consultation by Ofqual alternative arrangements for these qualifications will be sought and we will communicate these to students once we have received additional information. It is imperative to note however that internal assessment is expected to continue, where possible, and be delivered remotely where that is necessary. We must re-emphasise that it is key for your child to continue to actively engage with their remote learning and seek regular support from their teachers.

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Assessment 1 Reports

Despite the disruption we have faced this year we have continued to focus on delivering a rich knowledge based curriculum for our students and your child sat a series of assessments prior to the Christmas break. You will be receiving your child's report over the next week and I wanted to explain what the report will contain.

We understand that the uncertainty around grades and disruption during this academic year will have led to some concerns and anxiety for students. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted students in so many different ways but we, as a community, remain committed to ensuring no student is disadvantaged in their education. We also appreciate that periods of self-isolation and disruption to learning due to COVID-19 may have impacted on students' performance during Assessment Cycle 1.

We feel that your child's dedication and engagement in their learning during the first term of this academic year will be best reflected in their attitude to learning grades. As we wait for further information on centre assessed grades we have decided not to include any grades on Year 11 students' report but have chosen to focus on their attitude to learning instead. We feel that focus on these grades will be the most beneficial thing for supporting your child's further progress throughout the rest of the academic year and will help to contribute to whatever system we have to put in place.

Your child's report will outline the following for each of their subjects:

- **Attitude to Learning Grade** – An indicator of your child's approach to their learning in lessons.
- **Attitude to Learning Homework Grade** – An indicator of your child's approach to homework.

Although attitude to learning grades will be the only thing reported, we want to assure you that we have been regularly reviewing our curriculum and teaching to ensure that knowledge is revisited and gaps in knowledge have been, and will continue to be, addressed. Individual support and guidance for all students is also commonplace. We will ensure that they understand where they have been succeeding, how they can make improvements and ultimately how we can ensure they leave Newfield School with their very best grades.

If you have any queries about your child's report and wish to discuss anything further, please contact your child's Head of Year, Miss Illingworth (Head of Upper School) or myself.

Personal Development Lessons

Personal development lessons take place at Newfield School to provide students with curriculum opportunities that explore and develop their own values, whilst recognising that those of others may differ. The personal development curriculum covers a wide range of topics including how to lead a healthy lifestyle, good mental health, how to cultivate healthy relationships through school life and beyond and how to positively contribute to communities at a local, national and international level. Students are encouraged to think logically and maturely about wider issues and how to make informed decisions which support their beliefs and values, with coherent reasoning behind these.

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During these uncertain times we feel that it is vitally important that these lessons continue throughout the lockdown period. The lesson takes place at different times in order to provide equity across the curriculum and these can be seen in the table below;

Date	Day	Period
28/01/21	Thursday	2
02/02/21	Tuesday	4
12/02/21	Friday	2
25/02/21	Thursday	4
19/03/21	Friday	4
22/03/21	Monday	4
31/03/21	Wednesday	4

Students will be expected to complete their personal development lesson, either uploaded by their form tutors or Miss Fort, rather than their regular timetabled lesson.

Calendar Updates

In light of the current school closures and the indeterminate nature of our reopening to all students we have had to review upcoming events in the school calendar. In particular, we've had to adapt some of our Year 9 Options Process and therefore the INSET Day calendared for Friday 5 February will now be moved to Friday 5 March instead. In addition to this, it may be that the Year 11 Parents' Evening on Wednesday 24 February is moved but this will be communicated in due course.

As a school we have been inundated with messages of support and gratitude relating to the work we are doing with our young people. During difficult times we discover what our character is made of and the pandemic has shone a light on the wonderful spirit of the Newfield School community. We will endure and as we make progress towards a greater sense of 'normality' the words of Henry Ford are pertinent when he says, "coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success". This epitomises Newfield School.

Let's stick together, ensure we follow the health advice and remember that we do this as a society. Stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Yours sincerely



Mr C Kirton

Assistant Headteacher