



18 March 2021

Dear Year 11 and 13 Students, Parents and Carers,

Re: March Progress Report

As you know, I contacted you last week with a summary of the school's plans to teach, support and assess students who will be completing Year 11 and Year 13 courses this summer, in light of the cancellation of examinations.

Over the last week staff have been reassuring students of our intention to provide a number of opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do, while also drawing on as much permissible and robust evidence from over the course of GCSE and Sixth Form studies. Simply, we want to (and are required to) look at a range of assessment evidence, which demonstrates students' performance and justifies the award of a final GCSE, A-Level or vocational grade, against a national standard.

There are some who will, therefore, consider that the notion of exams being cancelled is false since it is clear that students will be sitting formal assessments in exam-style conditions in school in the coming weeks. However, the approach being adopted nationally this year enables schools to use a range of assessment materials, tailored to their students and what has been taught (not what has not been taught due to disruption and school closures).

We did not consider it to be in our students' interests to bring them back into school to complete a series of mock examinations. We are providing feedback in class and rapidly assessing students in lessons on learning carried out during the lockdown period.

In addition, this was always the time of year that the final predicted grade for students in both year 11 and 13 were issued for all subjects. We have continued with this in order for students and parents to see, based on the current evidence to hand, the professional judgements of performance of students at this point. As you know, there will be further important opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know and can do moving forward over the next 8 weeks. This is especially important since students typically do much better in assessments towards the end of the course.

Please find attached supplementary information addressing some Frequently Asked Questions, as produced by Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) which you may find useful as a reference point.

I am not sure how any school can confirm arrangements for the 'last day' with Year 11 and Year 13 students at present with any certainty (and the potential need to reverse a decision.) We expect that we may need to temporarily suspend teaching around May half-term to provide sufficient time for teachers to carry out marking, moderation and standardisation to reach objective and fair judgements but the Department for Education have not yet provided any guidance on attendance expectations for schools.

We would also then wish to consider, in common with other schools, how we can best prepare students for their next steps and progression to Sixth Form, college, university, employment or training. Once we have ascertained how and when this can happen we will be in touch.

I appreciate this has been an anxious time for families but I am confident that with regular attendance and efforts in class over the next 8 weeks our students will be supported to achieve the grades they want, need and deserve.

As ever, please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or concerns

Take care and Be Kind

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dee Elliott". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Mrs Dee Elliott
Head teacher