



5 January 2021

Dear Y11 & 13 Students

Cc: Y11 & 13 Parents & Carers

The Prime Minister announced last night that GCSE and A Level exams will not take place this summer in the normal way. In the coming days we will get details of what will replace them, and we are expecting a further statement on what alternative assessments may look like tomorrow from the Minister of Education. However, it seems reasonable to expect students will receive grades based on a similar system to 2020. This involved teachers assessing performance using **classwork and Independent Study, coursework, Practice Exam results, assessments and other evidence.**

I am aware of the shock and disappointment this news will bring. The government had consistently told students, parents and teachers that exams would happen this year, and we all planned on that basis. However, once the initial shock has worn off, I would urge you all to consider these three points, as they should provide some reassurance:

1. **Your hard work will still be recognised.** None of the effort you have shown so far, and will continue to show in the coming months, will be wasted. On the contrary, the new system will make sure this is fully reflected in your final grade.
2. **Your eventual results will be indistinguishable from real exams.** In the long run, it won't matter that your grades came via this system. You will still be able to progress to Sixth Form, apprenticeships and University in the normal way. The value of your GCSE and A Level qualifications is not being altered, only the way they are administered. None of your ambitions for the future will be affected by this decision.
3. **The new system will be fair and balanced.** Grades will be awarded based on objective evidence. Any grades that your teachers set will be moderated carefully, to ensure they are consistent within and between schools.

I know it is asking a lot of you all, on top of everything you have been through already, but you must **take these points on board and keep going.** Now is the time to remember our BARTS values, be brave and stay ambitious and continue to try your best whilst remaining safe; you will then be absolutely fine.

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Your teachers will guide and support you through the remainder of this year. **For now, Year 11 just turn up to your tutor at 8.40am every morning and Year 13 at 12.10pm, and to all your online lessons, keep working hard, and know that every piece of work you complete will still make a difference.** We then look forward to seeing you in school again after February half term.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Mortimore', with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

Ms J A Mortimore
Headteacher