



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S SCHOOL



7 January 2021

Dear Y13 Students,

As you will be aware, the Secretary of State for Education confirmed today that A Level exams will not be taking place this summer. In their place will be a 'a form of teacher-assessed grades' established from 'teachers rather than algorithms'. We have not received any more detail on the processes that this will involve and we do not anticipate much further information until the government complete a programme of consultation involving 'Ofqual, the exam boards and teaching representatives'.

We recognise how deeply unsettling this week's announcements must be for you all, and appreciate that the lack of detail on the processes behind 'teacher-assessed grades' leaves much room for confusion and anxiety. I hope that Ms Mortimore's email, addressed to both Y11 and Y13 yesterday, will have provided some reassurance. Following yesterday's announcement, I would like to share a few additional points.

- We will share more information with you all as soon as we can once further guidance is received from the government. Please be assured too that, as we were with the Centre Assessed Grades for last year's Y11 and Y13, we will be absolutely rigorous, fair and thorough in implementing the guidance received from Government and from exam boards.
- While we cannot yet confirm the processes that will establish your final grades, it is safe to assume that they will be informed by some degree of formal testing over the next few months. There will be no practice exams taking place between January 21-26. For many reasons, our preference would be to arrange for assessment in person to take place in school before Easter, but be reassured that if circumstances require, we will be in a position to support assessments completed remotely. Again, we will confirm plans as soon as further information from government is forthcoming.
- In the immediate term, therefore, while you do not have the prospect of practice exams very immediately on the horizon, it is very important that you remain motivated and focused on your academic work. You need to be aware that there will be formal assessment in one form or another before Easter. It is important to maintain your programme of revision, and more important than ever to impress your teachers with your commitment to remote learning and the submission of work.
- While not wanting to underestimate the challenges facing your particular cohort, and acknowledging how deeply unsettling this is for you all, in one key sense your position remains unchanged by this week's announcement. Despite everything, you still start the calendar year with much still to play for and with final grades still at stake.

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- Without further information from government, we cannot provide more detail on the teacher assessed grades or, for the time being, the practice exams. However, it is very important that you feel able to ask questions and talk openly with your teachers and tutors and the Sixth Form team. Please be aware, however, that at this stage, teachers will not be able to share any indication with you about possible final grades. Ms Allen will be sharing further information on systems to ensure that you continue to feel fully supported during lockdown.
- The position regarding BTECs is particularly complex. BTEC students will continue to be contacted directly as further information emerges.

Wishing you all the very best in these difficult times.

Kind Regards,

Mr A Robbins
Deputy Headteacher