May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to update you regarding the cancellation of this year’s summer public examinations. I know many of our students and their families have been anxious about the uncertainty around how students in Year 10 will be awarded grades this summer, if at all. We are sorry that we have not been in a position to clarify the situation for you prior to today, this was because OFQUAL held a national consultation period with all schools around Year 10 students and early entry GCSEs. The results of the consultation were published recently.

Initial information suggested that GCSE qualifications would be awarded only to Year 11 students in the summer. However, the Department for Education has now clarified that they will allow students in Year 10 to be awarded a calculated grade for ANY examination they were likely to have taken in the summer, including BTEC and other vocational courses, should a school choose to do so.

Whilst initially this seems like a very positive move forward for students in Year 10, we as a school have considered whether it is beneficial to claim calculated grades for Year 10 students or revisit our curriculum plans for September for Year 10 students moving into Year 11.

After careful consideration, the Academy has made the decision NOT to claim calculated grades for students in Year 10. I will explain our rationale for this below.

The Academy has been closed since Friday 20 March 2020, which is a period of 7 school weeks and we are unlikely to reopen fully to all students at any time in the near future. We cannot guarantee that when we return to school it will be on a full timetable from September and, as such, starting a new GCSE option (that was to replace the two completed options this year) will not be viable due to having missed a great deal of learning in the run up to the exams.

We believe it would be more beneficial to finish the two qualifications that students were due to complete this year, during the next academic year. This will allow students to secure possibly higher grades than they would have been given if awarded a calculated grade by the exam board. In all likelihood, Year 10 students would receive lower grades this year. Furthermore, students have worked extremely hard on their GCSE courses and deserve to receive the grades through their own hard work and not as a result of a calculated process. I know that Year 11 students are disappointed that they have not been able to “show what they are made of” in their exams.

Equally as important, this will give students extra time (if appropriate and required) to make up lost learning in the core subjects of English, maths and science as well as their other GCSE subjects.

If students were entered for a calculated grade this year they would be compared with a much smaller cohort of students (due to less Year 10 students completing GCSEs nationally as a result of the unusual circumstances). Therefore, the calculated grades are subject to much more variation and possible change, something that the Academy has no control over.

As I’m sure you will appreciate, this is a very complex situation and the Academy has spent a considerable amount of time considering the best way forward for students in Year 10 to give them the best chance of success in Year 11. With that said, we can and will support students in completing work in their two GCSE option subjects in this period of closure and on their return to school so that students can feel confident in securing good grades.

I know this is a time of great worry for you and your children and we are all in completely unchartered territory. None of us know how this situation will develop, however, I will do my best to keep you updated as and when there is more information to share with you.

In the meantime, if you have any questions please contact me by emailing: [info@appletonacademy.co.uk](mailto:info@appletonacademy.co.uk).

Yours faithfully



Mrs Garlick

Head of Secondary