

January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Due to the latest national lockdown in response to Covid-19, the government have announced that formal GCSE examinations in the summer will not now take place. Although we still have little information, we believe it prudent that we share the rationale behind a number of decisions we are making, and what we will be doing to ensure your child has the best possible access to learning in order to ensure their success in the summer.

Mock examinations were due to begin next week and these are now unable to go ahead. Ordinarily, the mock examinations are key to providing teachers with a very good insight into both the grade that your child is likely to achieve at the end of their studies and in identifying any gaps in their knowledge so that we can support them between now and the summer. We have, therefore, prepared packs of mock papers for students to collect and work on while we remain in the lockdown period and we will be in touch with parents and students early next week with suggestions on how to collect and use these.

In light of the government announcements regarding the cancellation of formal examinations, and the possibility of moving towards teacher assessments instead, it is more crucial than ever that your child engages fully with the online learning we are providing during this period, for two very clear reasons.

Firstly, we imagine that any teacher judgement towards a GCSE grade will need to be backed up by a thorough portfolio of work, which demonstrates that a student is working at the level assessed by the teacher. While we do not yet know the full process that will be used to arrive at centre-assessed grades, if it similar to last year, then all work completed between now and the summer will be crucial and will have a huge part to play in the grade Appleton Academy staff are able to evidence and submit to the examination boards. Secondly, students will be considering their next steps in education for September. This may include A-Levels and/or vocational qualifications at college and, therefore, a good study habit and continuing to learn will ensure that Post-16 content is accessible to them next academic year.

All remote learning set for your child will be communicated via the Microsoft Teams account that is linked to their school email address. Links will be provided to live lessons (usually but not solely pre-recorded), to worksheets and past examination questions, and opportunities to receive feedback from class teachers. Weekly overviews of the work being set will be available for you to see (including links to the work) on the school revision site at: <https://appletonrevision.weebly.com/>

After careful consideration we have decided to continue with the online Parents' Evening due to be held next week on Tuesday 12 January 2021 between 4:30pm and 7:00pm. This will provide you with an ideal opportunity to talk to your child's class teachers, to find out the progress they are making, what they need to do to make further progress and how you can support them at home with their remote learning. If you have yet to make appointments, please do so via the following link: <https://appletonacademy.schoolcloud.co.uk/> and follow the on-screen instructions.

We are aware that there is much uncertainty at the moment, please rest assured we will contact you with more information as and when it becomes available to us. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding online learning and student outcomes please feel free to contact me at: diane.whitehead@appletonacademy.co.uk.



Yours faithfully

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