



January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to update you regarding the upcoming January external examinations for some BTEC subjects and the recently announced cancellation of this year's summer public examinations. I know many of our young people and their families have been anxious about the uncertainty around the Year 11 January exams. Unfortunately, we have been unable to provide information as we have been waiting for clarity from the exam boards due to the announcement last night of the National lockdown.

Currently we have no information to explain how GCSE qualifications will be awarded in the summer and as a result we, as a school, have considered whether it is beneficial to ask Year 11 students to sit their January exam when there is so much uncertainty. At this moment we do not know what will potentially happen to the grade in the summer and we are now reviewing whether pupils will sit the exam as planned.

After careful consideration, the Academy has made the decision to allow your child to sit the January exams that they have been entered for, if they choose to do so. If you as a family are concerned about safety, you can request a withdrawal from the exam. I will explain our rationale for this below.

The government have asked schools to close to all but a minority of pupils for the health and safety of children, young people, their families, and the wider community due to the virulence of the new strain of coronavirus. If the exams were to go ahead, we would be asking young people to come into school to sit in a confined space for a sustained period of time whilst they complete their examination. However, we feel that we can mitigate risk with regard to these Year 11 exams specifically, in accordance with our risk assessment procedures, if students opt to sit them. In addition to this, we cannot guarantee what plans will be in place to ensure that pupils in Year 11 will be awarded a fair GCSE grade in the summer and how these exam grades will count towards the overall grade awarded. The government has not provided any information or clarity at this time.

You will receive a text link shortly, which will ask you to complete a form inviting you to state whether you would like your child to complete the exam or be withdrawn. The first exams are due to take place this Thursday 7 January 2021 at 9.00am and/or 1.30pm, therefore, we would ask that you complete the form as a matter of urgency to allow the Academy to plan appropriately. These exams will be planned in accordance with our COVID risk assessment.

As I am sure you will appreciate, this is a very complex situation and the Academy has spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the best way forward for pupils in Year 11 to give them the best chance of success. We will write to you again later this week about mock exams, the scheduled parents evening and our plans for remote learning.

I know this is a time of great worry for you and your children and we are all in completely uncharted 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.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Garlick".

Mrs Garlick
Head of Secondary