



8th January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

In my recent letter, I wrote that the Prime Minister had said on Monday that “not all exams” would be going ahead as normal this year because of the impact of Covid-19. I am writing to you today following the Government’s confirmation this week that there will be no GCSE, AS level and A level exams this year.

I know that this news may have been both disappointing and unsettling for your child, and for you. In spite of the disruption to the education of all children and young people over the last 10 months, our students have continued to work hard in preparation for exams this summer, with the promise of good grades that follow that commitment and diligence. Therefore, I understand that cancelling exams can be dispiriting.

However, assessment of students has not been cancelled and grades will still be awarded – so I would urge your child to continue to remain as committed to their studies as they have always been. Additionally, learning for learning’s sake, to gain knowledge and skills so they are successful, well-rounded citizens at school and after they leave, is at the core of what our students do each day with us, and that does not change simply because there will be no exams.

That our school, along with every other in the country, has closed except for vulnerable students or children of key workers, makes the situation more challenging, with most students having now switched to remote learning. Your support in ensuring that your child continues to work hard and engage fully with their studies from home is therefore more important than ever, and I would like to thank you for continuing to help us make this as successful as possible.

The Government has said that grades will be awarded to exam-year students by a method of teacher or school assessment. The full details of exactly how that system will work have not yet been decided by the Government but it has confirmed that grades will not be adjusted or moderated by an algorithm, which caused such difficulties last summer. We are still committed to having highly accurate teachers’ assessments which will likely involve a series of mock exams to support the production of these grades. As soon as the final details have been decided, I will write again to you so that you are fully informed.

For the January exams and assessments of vocational and technical qualifications, we have taken the decision to give students the option of continuing them or withdrawing. Whilst some students may feel disadvantaged in taking these examinations, due to a lack of expected face-to-face teaching time in school this month, I know that some have prepared thoroughly and would have been very disappointed to find that they were suddenly not allowed to take them.

I would like to end my letter by repeating my thanks to you for your ongoing support. We are all, whether students, parents or teachers, dealing with this exceptionally difficult period so well and I have found this sense of solidarity and community inspiring. Please do continue to help your child engage with their education as much as possible – the efforts that they, and you, put into these studies will bear fruit in the future. It *will* be worth it.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do let me know and we will support as best we can.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A. Price
Principal
George Salter Academy