



Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents,

### Year Eleven Update

It is with a heavy heart that I find myself once again writing to parents with regard to disruption to their sons' public examinations.

As you are aware the situation is continuously changing and we are working hard to keep up to date with the latest information from the government and the different exam bodies.

What do we know?

On the 6<sup>th</sup> January OFQUAL published this:

*We know that this is a difficult time for students, their parents and carers, teachers and trainers. Our message to students is this: please continue to engage as fully as you can in your education. That will be online for the majority of students, or face-to-face for those students still going in to their school, college or training provider. This will put you in the best position, whatever arrangements are made for your qualifications. It's important that teachers and students can focus on the knowledge and skills needed to equip students to progress to the next stage, whatever form that might take – whether to college, an apprenticeship, university or employment.*

*The way ahead is not straightforward: exams and standardised assessments are the fairest way of determining what a student knows and can do. We need to consider a wide range of qualifications – from A levels and GCSEs to many different vocational and technical qualifications – and the solution won't be the same for all. Following the government's announcement on Monday evening, we also need to consider how alternative arrangements will work for different students, including those who are independent learners. We are discussing alternative arrangements with the Department for Education. We know that many are seeking clarity as soon as possible. We will provide further updates as soon as we can.*

*The government has announced that schools and colleges can continue with the vocational and technical exams due to take place in January where it is right to do so. This may be particularly important for vocational and technical qualifications which require a 'licence to practise', which can only be fulfilled through practical assessment.*

**Simon Lebus**, Interim Chief Regulator, Ofqual

In addition, yesterday the government have confirmed that:

## MORE HOUSE SCHOOL

Moons Hill, Frensham, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 3AP

T: 01252 792 303 E: [schooloffice@morehouseschool.co.uk](mailto:schooloffice@morehouseschool.co.uk) W: [www.morehouseschool.co.uk](http://www.morehouseschool.co.uk)

More House School is firmly committed to safeguarding children | Registered Charity No. 311872 | Company Reg: London S23768

# **EXAMS**

- ▶ Students will not sit GCSE, AS and A level exams this summer
- ▶ A consultation will be launched next week and conclude swiftly to give certainty to schools, colleges and students
- ▶ We expect Ofqual, the exams regulator, to consider a teacher-assessed system as a replacement
- ▶ Teachers will be given training and support to ensure these marks are awarded fairly and consistently

**STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES**

So, essentially we know that we will be required to provide the examination boards with centre assessed grades (CAGS), but there is much uncertainty and speculation as to what this will entail in terms of evidence and moderation process.

Whilst we await the results of the 'swift' consultation process with the knowledge that the grades will be centre assessed, it is important that we continue to gain data on how the boys are performing in each subject. As you are aware we completed some of the mocks before the Christmas break but a number were forced to be rescheduled until the week commencing the 18<sup>th</sup> January.

We are keen that the boys are given the opportunity to 'sit' these outstanding mock papers and are reluctant to postpone them until after the February half-term for two reasons. One, we have no certainty as to whether we will be back in school then, and two, the boys have worked hard to prepare for these mocks and the general feedback from the boys is that they would like the opportunity to test their knowledge.

Over the last few days we have considered how these mocks could be run remotely and, whilst there is no perfect solution, we believe that we can provide the boys with an opportunity to test their knowledge in most subjects and those boys who are taking GCSE Music will have received an email from Mr Place today on a mock he will run next Wednesday.

In general, the logistics of running the mocks remotely would be:

1. Papers will be either mailed out in advance (supervised by parents) or released as an assignment on Teams (the boys are very familiar with this set up);
2. Boys will stay on line throughout the mock, ideally with cameras on and supervised remotely by their teacher. We may record the session for further evidence if required for moderation;
3. Boys who are struggling with the paper will be able to enter a separate room to talk to their teacher in private;
4. Where possible we will provide scribes as appropriate. This will require the boys to join a separate Team call with their scribe. Alternatively, parents will be able to scribe if that is a better solution;
5. Teachers can see individual pupils' work as it evolves throughout the session which provides further evidence of control and also adds to the validity of the test.

Of course, every situation at home is different and this has to be taken into consideration. Some boys will be confident accessing their mock in this manner, others will find it incredibly challenging and stressful. I should stress, that, should the general criteria for CAGs remain as it was last year, the mock assessments are JUST ONE piece of data used to support our decisions and by no means the only, or the most important.

Therefore, I would be really grateful for your thoughts to aid us in making a final decision. Specifically, I am keen to understand if you feel it appropriate to go ahead with the mocks in these conditions and any concerns you may have. To record your views please follow this link: [Thoughts on Year 11 Mock Assessments](#). I would be grateful if you could respond by 5pm on Monday.

I look forward to reading your views and in the meantime, thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Penni Kerr  
Deputy Head - Curriculum