



Year 11 Mock Examinations

29 November 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Year 11 students,

We are writing to confirm arrangements for the scheduled Year 11 mock examinations, which are due to restart on Tuesday 1 December 2020. You will recall that a student tested positive for Covid-19 as the previous mock examination period began, leading to a postponement of the mock examinations.

We have now confirmed with parents and students that unfortunately we are in the same position as previously, with a single year 11 positive test being reported to school on Friday 27 November 2020. However, on this occasion, we plan to continue with the mock examinations, whether students are in school or at home isolating. Students who are isolating will have their examination papers delivered to their homes on Monday or Tuesday next week, with clear guidelines and instructions for completion in an honest and fair manner.

With the transmission of the virus still relatively high within our communities, and the government's decision to place Derbyshire in Tier 3, clearly there remains an ongoing risk of further disruption to in school provision of teaching, assessment and support for our students.

The vast majority of our Year 11 students have been working diligently and with great determination and effort to prepare for these mock examinations. They have been revising both in school and at home in preparation for sitting their papers. The mock examinations are a valuable indicator to the teaching staff of where individual students' gaps in knowledge may exist. They provide a route map for staff to plan future lessons and interventions. For our students, the mock examinations help them to recognise what they need to do in order to progress well in their subjects in the spring, and then finally in preparation for the summer GCSE examination period.

Clearly students who complete their mock examination papers at home have a potential advantage over those that complete them in school under examination conditions. However, if the outcomes of the mock examinations are used to directly inform the points made above, there is no reason why these cannot be a very useful and valuable process for all students to experience. The opportunity to practice sitting these GCSE mock examinations is very important.

Year 11 students are aware that there remains some doubt over whether they will eventually be able to sit their final GCSE examinations in the summer. At this point, the government are clear in their thinking that they will be sitting GCSE examinations, albeit in some modified form. However these decisions may well be affected by the further impact of Covid-19 cases in schools and the unfortunate but necessary isolation of students from school. We await guidance from Ofqual, the regulator for examinations in England. If GCSE examinations are cancelled, as was the case this summer for outgoing Year 11 students, then teachers will likely be asked to estimate grades for students.

Bearing in mind that these mock examinations will be sat by students in school and at home the outcomes of these papers **will not** be utilised to potentially inform final grades or teacher assessments. We understand that these mock examinations will not be a consistently reliable method of predicting final grades in the summer. However, they will be used as noted above; to provide much needed practice for



students to attempt to answer examination style questions, help teachers plan for future teaching, and to recognise the hard work and dedication of so many of our wonderful students. We understand that many of them are anxious and concerned about their school work and therefore some positive feedback from sitting mock examinations may help them to feel more confident about their progress and proud of their achievements.

Further formal mock examinations will be held in the spring when we hope some normality to life and school has returned. At this point, all students will hopefully be able to complete these in school in a consistent manner. At this point we should know more from the government in terms of whether summer examinations will go ahead.

We will always continue to do our very best for our students and hope that they will understand the reasoning behind this decision at this point.

Yours faithfully

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Headteacher

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