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7th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers of Year 11s and Year 11 Students,

Re: Year 11 Examinations and Year 11 Results

It has been clear over the last week that there have been many decisions made by the Government that impact schools, academies and our students. In particular the decisions that were made earlier this week will have affected Year 11 students more than any other students across the country.

What do we know?

The Government made the decision to put the country into a national lockdown on Monday evening. At this point, the Prime Minister made clear that carrying on with school exams this summer in the way that they had originally planned was not going to be feasible. What he and the Department for Education (DfE) said at the time was that the exams would not go ahead as planned this summer but the January vocational exams would still take place over these next few weeks.

Yesterday, just over 24 hours later, Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Education, confirmed that the summer exams are being cancelled for A-Level, AS-Level and GCSE. He stated that these are likely to be replaced by grades based on teacher assessments. He has yet to confirm the exact process this will take and we are not likely to know for a few weeks. We do know from last year that teachers and academies being able to provide evidence to justify the grades that they ultimately gave students was important and there is the possibility this will be the same this year. Whilst the Government confirmed the cancellation of the current examinations this summer, there has been speculation that there still may be internal assessments that schools are asked to run for Year 11 to provide some of the evidence used to award grades. Equally, what still has not been made clear is how grades for vocational courses will be awarded and these are questions that continue to be asked by teachers, schools and academies across the country.

What happens next?

The DfE has said that they are beginning a consultation with Ofqual (the examinations regulator) to look at processes to award grades and to ensure that they are as fair as can be. We will not know the outcome of this consultation for several weeks yet. As a result, it is important that as Year 11 students you continue to attend your online lessons with your subject teachers. Any work, contributions to lessons and ultimately any tests or assessments you sit could all still be used in providing evidence for your final grades for your courses. For parents and carers, it is essential that your child is supported in their efforts to continue their education and all assistance that you can provide is appreciated by everyone in the Academy community.

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'the best that we can be'

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What about my vocational exams next week?

On Monday evening, the Government initially said that vocational exams would carry on as planned. By Tuesday afternoon, the Government changed tack to say that schools, academies and colleges could make the decision as to whether the exams would run. Despite calls from several MPs on Wednesday, Mr Williamson would not be drawn any further on this and so the Government position has not changed.

As a result, TNHA will still be running the exams that have been scheduled for Sport, Child Development, Health and Social Care and Business over the next few weeks. We fully appreciate that the decision to sit these exams is not purely based on the academic context but there will be many of you who will ask whether it is safe to come into the Academy to sit these exams in the middle of a national lockdown. We have and will be taking all the necessary precautions to keep students who do come in for these exams safe and are putting extra measures in place to ensure this.

Our position and the position of ATT (our Trust) is that we want students to still sit these exams for some of the reasons that have already been mentioned in this letter, but also because we know many of our students will have been working hard over the last few weeks in preparation for these exams. Equally, we are aware that there are different pressures and issues to be considered in the current climate, which could make sitting these exams even more challenging than they would normally be.

We want to encourage as many students who were scheduled to sit exams over the next few weeks to sit their exams. However, I will reiterate the DFE stance that *"No student will be disadvantaged if they can't take their exam or assessment or decide they don't want to. We will consult on how to ensure students get a fair grade working with Ofqual and stakeholders like the Association of Colleges."*

In order to help us plan please could students or parents of students who are scheduled to sit exams over the next couple of weeks complete the short form linked to this letter indicating whether they will or will not be intending to sit their upcoming exams. I appreciate in the current climate things can change at the very last minute but any information at this stage would be useful for us.

[Click on this link for the January Exams Feedback Form.](#)

[\(or email Kate.Winter@tnha.org.uk\).](mailto:Kate.Winter@tnha.org.uk)

As always, if you have concerns or worries, in the first instance please speak with your class teachers and/or Mr Nash or Mrs Seaman.

I appreciate for all of you that situation we are in has created just more uncertainty for you and your futures. We will continue to do all we can to keep you informed and support you in progressing onto the next phases of your education or training, as well as ultimately working to secure you the grades that we know you are capable of achieving.

Kind regards



Mr Woodhouse
Principal