



7th January 2021

Dear Parents and Students of Year 11,

I hope you had a good Christmas holiday and are having a good start to the New Year, albeit a very different one than the one we had all planned.

It was with a heavy heart that we heard in the Prime Minister's broadcast on Monday that GCSE exams have been cancelled this year. This news has then been followed by cancellation of OCR and BTEC examinations.

We are immensely proud of our Year 11 students who, so far this year, have made significant progress towards their planned exams. Students adjusted well on their return to school after such a long time absent last year and since September have worked hard to get on track to complete their courses and make the progress so many of them deserve. Teachers were becoming increasingly confident in the learning taking place and the overall maturity of our students. We were, and still are, expecting an excellent set of results in 2021.

The Secretary of State for Education announced on Wednesday 6 January that student grades this year will now be based upon Teacher Assessment. We await guidance on what that actually means in practice! What he did make clear, though, was that algorithms would not be used and that teachers would be trusted to recommend the final grade, as was eventually the case last summer. I can assure you that teachers at Marshland will continue to act professionally, with transparency and integrity, when making the final judgement on student grades.

What is different from last year however, the aim is when conditions allow that students will return to school to continue their studies. I cannot stress enough how immensely important it is for students to complete their education, ensuring that they continue to give their best efforts to learn the knowledge and develop the skills they will need to move on to post-16 education and training. As a school, we will make every effort to ensure that each student is not disadvantaged in any way and has the opportunity to continue on to their first-choice post-16 destination.

If students have not yet finalised their post-16 provision, they should contact Mr Saunders urgently who will be able to provide additional support.

It is incredibly important that each student recognises what an opportunity they are now presented with: their teachers want them to succeed! For success to be forged, students must engage fully in online lessons over the next few weeks and participate willingly in face-to-face lessons when they return to school potentially after February half term. Attendance both

online and in school when we return must be an absolute priority. Teachers will need to evidence their judgements carefully and any gaps will become increasingly more difficult to fill over the next few months as we move nearer to the end of the year. I am confident that our students will recognise this opportunity and continue to apply the effort and dedication towards their studies that they demonstrated before Christmas, probably with renewed vigour.

When the government notifies us of their expectations, we will write to you again regarding the assessments that will take place in order to evidence grades.

Finally, I want to reassure all parents and students not to worry. I remain confident in the ability of our teachers and students to excel, and that we will be celebrating Year 11 success in the summer, when I hope the world will have returned to normal.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Mr Craig Jansen