

29 January 2021

Dear parents/carers and Year 11 students

I understand that this has been an unsettling few weeks for students, parents and carers, following the government's decision to cancel exams on account of the pandemic.

As you may already be aware, the exams regulator Ofqual recently launched a consultation on how GCSEs will be awarded this summer, with final decisions due to be announced before the end of February.

While we await final details, the Government has already said it expects students' grades to be based on teacher assessments. These could use a range of evidence – including, for example: coursework; mock or other school-based tests; and short assessment papers, provided by the exam boards and taken, and marked, at school. We understand contingencies are being looked at for those students unable to sit exams, or who have been more adversely affected by the pandemic or other circumstances beyond their control. Plans are being considered for exam boards to provide training to help teachers make their assessments, and to carry out light checks or sampling at different schools to ensure results are fair and consistent across the country.

Ofqual expects schools to make and submit their assessments in late May/early June. Therefore it is essential that your child continues to engage fully in their education – completing assignments and participating in remote lessons as much as they can. This will provide us with the right information to determine accurate grades, and ensure they develop the knowledge and skills they will need in the next stage of their education, training or work.

I understand many of you will be anxious about how your child's GCSEs will be graded – please be assured that whatever final decisions are made, we will do everything possible to help Netherwood students to progress successfully to the next stage of their lives. It appears that results may be released sooner than is normal – around mid-July. This is good news, and will give us more time to support your child before they move on.

I am acutely aware of the pressure our year 11 students are under. Staff will continue to keep a close eye on their resilience and wellbeing. We have excellent pastoral care in place for any student who requires it. Should you have any concerns about your child's welfare, please do not hesitate to contact their tutor or Year Team to discuss any additional support we can provide.

Kind regards



Mr J Mitchell
Principal