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Dear Parents/ carers

**Principal: Mr I Patel**

### **Home learning and GCSE years**

You may have seen the announcement from the Secretary of State for Education regarding the cancellation of GCSE and A Level exams. Many of you, understandably, have been concerned and shocked by the announcement regarding this news. I know this has been very disappointing to our Year 11 students as they have been working hard and preparing for their GCSEs and feel that an opportunity to show what they are capable of has been taken away from them.

### **The headline messages from the governments' speech is as follows:**

- This year's summer GCSE exam series has been cancelled.
- Last year teachers were asked to input 'Centre Assessed Grades' which was a teacher assessment and then the government applied a mathematical formulae to work out a final grade. There were a number of problems with this method, so in 2021 the government has said that they will trust the teachers to avoid any unfairness in calculations. This is good news.
- The government has planned to provide some training and support to teachers to ensure that grades are awarded fairly and consistently across the country. This is also good news as no student will have an unfair advantage or disadvantage.
- The government and the exam regulation body (Ofqual) have got some plans, but they have not yet shared that with schools.
- Ofqual will be conducting a detailed consultation next week, which will run for two weeks and after this I hope to be in a position to have more information about the final grades which I will share with you.

### **What does this mean for you child?**

- The final grades submitted to exam boards will involve teachers **assessing performance using classwork (face to face and online), homework, coursework, mock exams grades, assessment grades, attitude to learning and the degree of engagement with online lessons.**
- All students **MUST** carry on working incredibly hard every lesson, every day and complete all the set work so that teachers have lots of evidence which they can use to submit to the exam board.
- Teachers will be collating work and evidence for every student in every subject and engagement of students will be tracked and monitored every day, this will contribute to the final grade.
- I expect exam boards to ask teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead.
- To produce this, teachers will take into account the range of evidence above and data – I expect the government to provide schools clear guidance on how to do this fairly and robustly.

- Year 11 students will be awarded a grade for their GCSEs which will have equal credibility as if they had sat their exam and it will not disadvantage them for Sixth Form or University.
- Similar to last year, I expect students will have the option to take an exam later in 2021 or 2022 if they feel that the teacher assessed grade is not a true reflection of what they had hoped to achieve in their exam. This has not yet been confirmed.
- Similar to last year, I expect the government to provide a route for appeal if the student feels that the grade is not a reflection of the evidence. This has not yet been confirmed.

At Orchard Mead Academy all our available home learning resources for students to use during this lockdown is on MS Teams and homework is on Class Charts. Please encourage your son/daughter to undertake all the set work following their normal timetable and check their emails and engage with the work every day to the best of their ability.

Please be assured that our staff at Orchard Mead are fully committed to ensuring that your children get the recognition and qualifications that they absolutely deserve and we promise to work closely with all authorities to ensure that the final grades are fair and reflect our student's hard work.

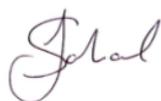
The information we are receiving from the Government is changing on a daily basis, so we will do our best to keep you updated as and when we receive it.

We would like to thank you for your support and understanding through what is proving to be a challenging time for all of us. We understand that many of you will be anxious and concerned about the next few months, but rest assured, we are doing everything we can to support your children through this time.

New information is being released daily. We will continue to take advice and guidance from Public Health England and the Department for Education. We will be updating our website and social media sites as and when updates are available.

Once again, thank you for your continued support during this unprecedented time.

Kind Regards,



Subrina Johal  
Vice Principal