

19 March 2020

Dear Parent and Student

**Communication to Year 11 and Sixth Form Families**

Yesterday evening we heard the news that this summer's public examinations will not be taking place. The Secretary of State said :

"We can confirm that we will not go ahead with assessments or exams, and that we will not be publishing performance tables for this academic year.

We will work with the sector and Ofqual to ensure children get the qualifications they need.

My Department is working closely with local authorities, representatives of early years, schools and head teachers, regional school commissioners and bodies such as Ofsted and Ofqual about how to deliver this change as effectively as possible.

And we will do whatever is necessary to support local authorities, schools and teachers through the weeks and months ahead."

Although this provides helpful clarity about what has been the subject of speculation for some while, it is undoubtedly massively upsetting for our young people. They doubtless will be experiencing a range of emotions. In addition to upset I am sure many will be confused, disappointed and worried about what the future holds for them. Earlier this morning, with students who were present in school, I held an assembly where we begun the process of addressing this.

The first thing I said, and I want to reiterate, is that we are here for them and we will do everything in our power to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in any way. Although we are yet to hear the detail from the Department for Education and Ofqual as to how examination results are going to be awarded, we have had reassurance that students will get qualifications. Beechwood staff and Beechwood students have been striving very hard together to secure excellent results. We were very optimistic about good outcomes. We were expecting our Sixth Form and our Year 11 students to get even better grades than our last year's cohorts and indeed this is still the reality. We will make sure that all the evidence we have about progress to date and all our professional expertise and experience with regards to predicting final outcomes will be utilised well when we engage with the authorities about the awarding of grades.

I also assured the students that we would stop at nothing to ensure that they secured the progression routes they were aspiring to. For most senior students this relates to university progression, progression into apprenticeships and into their chosen careers. For our other students it means securing their Year 12/post 16 pathway or their progression into Year 13. We are determined that the work that has been taking place will result in the outcomes students have been aspiring to and deserve. With regards to all of this, we will keep you updated once we know more detail.

Whilst students are not in school and are waiting to proceed to the next stage of their education or progress into employment, we know that they will no longer be preparing for their examinations but we do urge the following.

- Keep all books, folders, resources. They may be very useful going forward.
- Complete all coursework in-line with current guidance being given by teachers.
- Engage in our Sixth Form Transition and Graduation Projects.
- Pursue learning and securing something to put on CVs via the websites that Ms Doncaster and Ms Irvine will be sharing on Google Classroom.

Information will be sent out via Google or, for those without IT/Internet access at home, via paper copy through the post.

Finally, in terms of this communication, I am really aware that in addition to the huge upset in relation to not sitting exams, there will be disappointment that we won't be able to have our Prom and Special Events to mark the end of Years 11, 12 and 13. I have, however, assured our young people that even if we have to run these events in the new academic year - ie: September – we will do so. These special and memorable events are postponed not cancelled. We will share more about all of this in time.

These are difficult times and something that we have not experienced before. We will get through it though. Normality will return and I have no doubt that our young people, if well supported, will ultimately grow and be stronger after the experience of dealing with such difficulty. I told them we are here for them to support them. They can keep in contact via e-mail and the usual appropriate channels. They truly are a wonderful group of young men and women. They have great futures ahead of them and they will go on to realise these great futures. I am so proud of them.

Very best wishes.



**Kathleen M Higgins**  
**Executive Headteacher**