

Dear Year 11 Parents and Pupils,

I would like to start by taking this opportunity to thank all parents and members of the community for their support and words of encouragement to all staff during these difficult times. I would also like to publicly thank all of the staff at Harrytown, who have been continuing to support the learning and wellbeing of pupils.

It goes without saying that this has been the strangest, most surreal period of time we have ever experienced. The school has stayed open for those children of key workers to enable them to carry out their work supporting the NHS, care workers and other key roles.

In terms of Year 11 pupils, and further to my letter on 20 March 2020, we have now received additional guidance from Ofqual relating to the grading of all Year 11 pupils in their GCSE subjects. This was published on 3 April and is available to view on their website and our school website.

Ofqual state: "We are asking schools and colleges to use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grade they believe a student would have achieved had they sat their exams this year. It is important that schools and colleges take into account the full range of available evidence when they grade students - including non-exam assessment; the results of any homework assignments or mock exams; and any other records of student performance over the course of study. We are also asking schools and colleges to provide a rank order of students within each grade. This is because the statistical standardisation process will need more granular information than the grade alone. We have provided clear guidance to schools and colleges on the grading and rank ordering process to help staff in different schools and colleges take a common approach to assessing their students."

Ofqual then went on to inform us that each exam board will be issuing guidance for each subject on how this should be done, and the deadline for submission of all marks, after the Easter holidays. As a school we use a number of exam boards for different qualifications. Therefore, as a school **we cannot, and will not, inform pupils about what we will report as it is confidential and is subject to change.** However, we will endeavour to be as fair and realistic as possible. We have added a comment to this effect onto 'ShowMyHomework' and have asked all teachers to refer pupil queries to this.

As educators, with many years of experience in supporting pupils through GCSE and transition to Post-16 processes, we are mindful that Year 11 pupils have missed out on opportunities this year. A vital part of life learning accompanies an intensive revision period in the build up to final GCSE examinations, developing synoptic understanding of each subject and developing resilience by dealing with the pressure of daily exams. Not experiencing this could make the transition to Post-16 more difficult unless pupils remain in good learning and working habits. The Department for Education have stated that if pupils do not feel their calculated grade, which they are expected to receive in August 2020 or possibly before, reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam, as soon as is reasonably possible after schools and colleges open again and /or in summer 2021.¹ With this in mind, we will still set revision tasks for those elements of the GCSEs which we feel are still pertinent. Completing

'I have come that they have life and have it to the full' John 10:10

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courses and undertaking revision will also help pupils develop some of the essential skills and resilience they will need later in life when preparing for subsequent examinations.

It is becoming clear that the need for us to stay at home will continue for weeks to come. I would encourage pupils to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle during the 'lockdown' i.e. good sleep patterns, healthy diet, appropriate exercise and keeping themselves mentally and academically healthy with regular reading and school work via 'ShowMyHomework'. Children and Young People are equally as likely to catch the coronavirus (Covid-19) as any other age group in the population. Therefore, they have a very important role in reducing the spread of the infection so that the health service can manage in these extraordinary times. It is very important that young people do not physically mix with others outside of their household, difficult though this can be.

As stated in my letter of 20 March once the current situation has passed (national response to the threat of COVID-19) we will endeavour to make provision for Year 11 to come together as long as it is safe to do so. Moreover, we will get in touch with those pupils who have ordered hoodies, for example, when it is appropriate to do so.

Finally, I encourage you to stay in contact with school through our website. Staff are working from home and are able to respond to enquiries, preferably via ShowMyHomework. We all look forward to a point where we can celebrate re-opening to our pupils and recover some semblance of normal life. I hope you are all able to stay well. May God Bless you all and all who are associated with our school in any way.

Yours sincerely



K Turmeau
Headteacher