



The Matthew Arnold School

Part of the Bourne Education Trust



20th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Exams update

I am writing to explain what the Government has decided to do for those students who would have been expecting to take public exams this summer, and who have just found out that this is no longer the case.

The first priority is their immediate wellbeing. The fact is that they have had everything they have been working for taken away from them with very little warning, and it could take some time for them to assimilate what that means. We know that the burden of support will now fall much more heavily on you, but we are here to help them through this unprecedented situation.

The Government has now published its plans for the arrangements for exams which have been cancelled to fight the spread of coronavirus. The key elements for students in years 11 and 13 are:

1. The Government's priority is now to ensure affected students can move on as planned to the next stage of their lives, including going into employment, starting university, college or sixth form courses, or an apprenticeship in the autumn.
2. University, college and school representatives have confirmed that they expect institutions to be flexible and do all they can to support students and ensure they can progress to the next stage of their education.
3. GCSE, A level and vocational students will be awarded a grade which fairly reflects the work that they have put in. To produce these levels or grades, teachers will take into account a range of evidence and data including mock results, class work and non-exam assessments. Given the large amount of evidence the school has gathered to support its predictions; students should feel reassured that the hard work they have put in will not be in vain. The exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment, to produce a calculated grade for each student.
4. If students do not believe the correct process has been followed in their case, they will be able to appeal on that basis. In addition, if they do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam at the earliest reasonable opportunity, once schools are open again. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021.
5. In terms of a permanent record and the exam certificate, the levels and grades awarded will be indistinguishable from those provided in other years.

Now that there is clarity about the summer exams there is going to be a significant gap before our students embark on their next steps. It is important that they continue with their studies so that they can start afresh when we return to normality with confidence. I am therefore asking for your support in encouraging your child to work from home, completing tasks set remotely by their class teachers.



If your child wishes to keep open the option of sitting exams in school once it reopens or in summer 2021, it is important that he or she continue to revise or practise for these exams, although not at such a fierce pace as before. There is already a wealth of resources available on the website, on Show My Homework and on the Internet, as well as in students' own books and revision materials.

We will be publishing an updated 'working from home' guide which should provide advice and resources to students whatever their new focus is. This should be available early next week. However, I strongly suggest that you encourage your child to take a break from all serious school work for an agreed time, and to help them focus on eating well, sleeping well, keeping fit and healthy and in touch with friends and family through these coming weeks of [social distancing](#).

Finally, we are continuing to plan for a prom, leavers' assembly, yearbook and hoodie, although the exact format and timing of these events is not clear at the moment. I will of course update you with further developments as soon as I get them.

With such an uncertain future ahead of us, where momentous decisions are made overnight, we are all going to need each other's support, care and kindness. Please contact the school if you need any further help or guidance regarding your child's next steps.

I wish you all the very best for the weeks and months ahead.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Gould', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mary Gould
Headteacher