

Dear Parent/Carer,

06 January 2021

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday 4th January that schools would close until at least February Half term, today the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson has announced a full cancellation of GCSE and A-Level exams for the Summer 2021 season.

For many of your children this will be a time of significant anxiety regarding how their continuing hard work throughout their courses will be assessed and how this will impact on their progression to the next stage of education. We also understand how upsetting and difficult this must be as parents and we will endeavour to provide you with ongoing guidance on how to support your child as we receive more information in coming weeks.

At present, schools have been given an outline of the following changes and we will update parents and carers on the detail of the changes as they are released by the Department for Education and Ofqual.

Year 11 - GCSE Exams:

- There will be no GCSE exams in Summer 2021.
- For Year 11 students scheduled to take these exams, they will instead be awarded Teacher Assessed Grades.

Year 13 - A-Level Exams:

- There will be no A-Level exams in Summer 2021.
- For Year 13 students scheduled to take these exams, they will instead be awarded Teacher Assessed Grades.

BTEC Exams:

- At present Year 11, 12 and 13 BTEC Exams scheduled for the January/February series are continuing as planned.
- St Marks staff will be in touch with your child if there are scheduled to take these exams to arrange a LFD Covid test so that they are able to take these exams safely.
- At present there is no detail about whether or not BTEC Exams due for the summer series will go ahead.

All staff at St Marks are committed to ensure that the young people studying with us receive a grade that is fair, accurate and reflective of the work that they have done throughout their course, and we will update you in the coming weeks when we have more information about system that will be implemented to award teacher assessed grades.

For all students due to sit exams, it is hugely important that they continue to engage with home learning as we will need to use all available evidence to accurately assess them. Please make sure

Interim Principal Hannah Fahey

your child is fully engaged with their Teams work each day and that they are completing their extended assignments as well as their daily quizzes.

In order to support your child/young person effectively please consider the following top tips on effective home learning:

- Work with your child to create a structure for the day that includes a regular start, break, lunch and end time so that they are able to build effective routines. You may want to create a daily timetable with them that includes their regularly scheduled lessons alongside breaks and time away from screens.
- Agree a quiet space in the house that your child/young person will work from where they can avoid distraction. This might not always be a bedroom but could be a table in the kitchen or this could be a space that moves throughout the day to fit in with family life.
- Ask your child/young person to share with you each day what they have learnt. This could be the topic that they found most interesting, the subject they found most challenging or the topic that they were most excited about learning. These conversations can help you understand more about your child's engagement and where they may need to contact their teachers for further support.
- Encourage your child/young person to use a notebook/paper to make notes on their TEAMS lessons as they work through the activities rather than being reliant simply on listening to the audio lessons. This will help them develop independent learning skills and active note taking which are extremely important skills for moving on to the next stage in education.
- Encourage your child to do something every day to contribute to their wellbeing. This could be some time away from their screens/social media, a walk as part of daily exercise or sometime completing a creative activity such as cooking, drawing or listening to a mediation exercise.

Parents who have children in Year 11 and require further guidance or support with developing their child's revision and work ethic should contact jkhan@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk (Vice Principal in charge of Curriculum Intent). Similarly, parents who have children in Year 13 and require further guidance or support with developing their child's revision and work ethic should contact sbhadare@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk (Director of Science and Sixth Form)

Thank you so much in advance for your ongoing support during this challenging time. We look forward to welcoming your child back to the Academy in the coming months and working closely with them to secure their best outcomes to enable them to move on successfully to their next stage of education.

With Love, Hope and Trust

Jennie Khan – Vice Principal – Curriculum Intent.