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Dear Parents/Carers,

Summer term update - Year 11

I hope you and your families are all well and you were able to enjoy some of the wonderful weather over the Easter break.

It has been five weeks since your child was last in school and three weeks since I last wrote to you. During this time there have been a number of developments and updates in the Department for Education's (DfE) response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. As families, you have had to adapt and respond to some significant changes, most notably the cancellation of GCSE summer exams and school closure. As a school community, we are all working together to support each other, appreciating how the situation will affect us all in many different ways.

GCSE update

As yet, there have been no significant developments in the DfE's plans for summer exams, since I sent to you all the document Ofqual produced to inform us of their plans for exam grades. Whilst we have an idea of how we are expected to work with exam boards, in order to ensure your child receives a grade, there is an ongoing consultation which will inform the finer details. Students and their parents/carers, along with teachers are able to express their views in this consultation process, but there is limited time to do so. A link to the consultation has been placed on the school website, where you can also view the document from Ofqual.

In the document Ofqual produced, it outlines the factors class teachers need to consider in providing grades for students. This document is still on the school website and was attached to a previous ParentMail communication I sent to all parents/carers of Year 11 students. There is no other guidance or instruction relating to the process of exam grade calculation at present. As and when more information becomes available, I will share it with you.

When the time comes to submit grades to the exam boards, we will not be allowed to share the grades submitted to exam boards with students. I ask for students and parents/carers to acknowledge and accept this, as none of the staff in school want to be in a position where they have to refuse a request for this information. As things stand, students will receive their GCSE results on Thursday 20th August and we will write to you closer to the time to confirm arrangements for this.

Study/work/learning expectations

At this point in the school year, in the vast majority of subjects, your child would be revising, in preparation for their exams. Whether in class or at home, some of the key reasons for revision is to consolidate prior learning and check accurate recall and application of knowledge and skills. However, we can sometimes lose sight of the importance of learning and growing our knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly when there are exams looming. Discovering new things, increasing what we know and can do is about so much more than exams, so there is now an opportunity for your child to reinvigorate their love of learning and their natural curiosity.

Furthermore, our daily lives will return to something more closely resembling normal. We want our children to thrive when this time comes, as opposed to struggling to bridge knowledge gaps and remembering how to study and acquire knowledge and skills. Continuing with some form of learning, academic and practical, will ensure they are well-prepared for the time the coronavirus (COVID-19) 'lockdown' ends.

This time should now be used by your child to prepare for their post-16 destination, whether this be in a place of work, an apprenticeship or course at sixth form or college. Teachers will continue to guide the learning experiences of your child, in the subjects they would normally have lessons in. They will provide them with opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects they were due to sit exams for. If asked, teachers will provide feedback and advice on work submitted to them. We are not able to promise that work submitted to teachers after 20th March 2020 will factor in to your child's grades, however this work will be retained, in the unlikely event we are asked to provide evidence in support of the grades submitted to exam boards.

Shrewsbury Colleges Group have created a wide range of resources to help prepare your child for the courses they are due to start in September. Whilst I am sure many of you will have seen this already in the ParentMail communication from Mr Jervis on Wednesday 15th April, the link to these resources is here: <https://www.scg.ac.uk/pre-enrol>

Mental health, well-being and other support

As a school, we are monitoring the contact we are having with all our students, this is so we can ensure we have regular communication with your child and all children in our care. This is often in the form of short 'check-ins' with form tutors, but also via subject teachers and work submitted by your child. If you have any worries or concerns about your child, or one of their friends, a good place to go for some initial help and support is your child's form tutor. We have also updated our website, where you will find a range of support options from organisations which specialise in supporting children with their mental health: <https://www.marywebbschool.com/mental-health/>.

If you have serious concerns about the welfare of your child or child known to you, we would always advise you contact the Shropshire Safeguarding team on: 03456789021, as well as contacting our safeguarding team, via email, at: safeguarding@marywebbschool.com.

We have been contacted by organisations in our local community to publicise the support they can offer to families during these challenging times. You will find attached a leaflet from them.

Thank you for all the support you continue to give the school community. It is a challenging time for us all, but through our work together, we can ensure our children receive the support they need. On behalf of the whole school community, I wish you all well and I hope you and your families continue to remain safe.

Kind regards,

PJ Lowe-Werrell

Mr P J Lowe-Werrell
Headteacher

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