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Dear Year 11 and Parent/Carers,

I know many of you will be worried about what will happen with GCSEs and unsure what you should be doing now. These are unprecedented times and sadly, the truth is that we do not know much more than you; however, what we are able to do is to use our professional experience to give you as much guidance as we can. I hope this will start to answer some of your questions.

How will exam grades be decided?

This afternoon Education Secretary Gavin Williamson confirmed in the House of Commons today that GCSE, AS and A-level grades will not go ahead this year, and that the government is to use a form of teacher assessment grades, with training and support provided to ensure these are awarded fairly and consistently across the country. What this means in practice is not yet entirely clear. However it does mean that all students need to continue to work as they normally would in order to build up an evidence base in each subject of the best work they can produce.

What should I be doing now? Can I stop working?

We need all students to continue working by logging into every lesson, completing all work set by your teachers, all of whom are here to support. Although exams have been cancelled assessment by teachers has not and will be a significant factor in the process of deciding centre assessed grades. All of the work students submit needs to be of the highest standard that they can manage, using the notes and resources available as this will be critical in providing evidence for predicting the best grade that we professionally can, when the time comes. Until we have any further guidance we need you to trust that continuing to work 'as normal' is the right thing to do.

We will send regular updates as we find out more, but the most important thing is that you all stay well and maintain your school timetable routine which will help in these unusual days. In addition, making sure you keep to the guidance about social distancing will help bring this period to an end as soon as possible.

I can't believe that I am saying this – but use social media (outside of virtual lessons) to keep in touch with your friends!

Best wishes

Mr Whitehead

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