



March 2020

Dear Families,

This has been an extremely challenging few weeks for all children but particularly those students in Years 11 and 13 who were due to take their GCSEs and A Levels in the coming months. I am sure you are aware that late on Friday evening the government announced some initial guidance about the exam grading process. This will no doubt have initiated a lot of questions, however, answers are not yet fully clear, and what we are unable to tell you is what grade you will get. Since Friday there have also been further updates, so this is an ever-changing process.

The process will involve schools submitting grades based on a range of evidence (yet to be fully explained to us). These grades will then be subject to a further process by exam boards, taking into account wider data (again as yet to be fully defined) and subjected to a grades awarding process to ensure the national distribution of grades matches previous years.

There is a lot to do, and grades will not be awarded until the end of July. Please do not ask teachers about what grade you will be getting - although I know you want to. I hope you can see that there is plenty to do to confirm any predictions that we make. We will, though, do everything necessary to ensure that you are awarded the grade you deserve, using as wide a range of evidence as possible.

AQA have provided the following guidance;

- Regulators will develop and set out a process that will provide a calculated grade to each student which reflects their performance as fairly as possible and will work with us and the other exam boards to ensure this is consistently applied for all students.
- Exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead.
- To produce this, teachers will be asked to take into account a range of evidence and data including performance on mock exams and non-exam assessment. Clear guidance on how to do this fairly and robustly will be provided to schools and colleges soon.
- Exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment, and use this information to produce a calculated grade for each student, which will be a best assessment of the work they have put in.
- Regulators and exam boards will be discussing with teachers' representatives before finalising the approach, to ensure that it's as fair as possible. More information will be provided as soon as possible.
- The aim is to provide these calculated grades to students before the end of July.
- These grades will be indistinguishable from those provided in other years.

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- We'll also aim to ensure that the distribution of grades follows a similar pattern to that in other years, so that this year's students aren't disadvantaged.
- Students will be able to appeal their grades if they don't believe the right process has been followed.
- There will also be an option to sit exams early in the next academic year for any students who wish to – and students can also choose to sit exams next summer

For those students who are studying BTECs the information received is that you should continue to complete your assignments and coursework and submit them to your teachers for marking as these will undoubtedly form part of the evidence gathering process.

Courses such as Drama and Music have already completed their coursework, and this has been submitted for verification. We have also continued with entries for students in Years 12 and 13 who were resitting Maths and English and we believe that these will be subject to the same process as listed earlier by the exam boards.

If you took BTEC examinations earlier this year and were expecting results, these are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and these will be posted out to you. If a resit is required, we will contact you directly to agree this course of action.

Year 13s may be getting revised offers from Universities and we would ask you to contact the 6<sup>th</sup> Form team prior to accepting unconditional offers.

Year 11 students who applied to Shireland 6<sup>th</sup> Form will receive communication from us this week to clarify your offer and the process going forward into next academic year.

As I said earlier this is a time of huge uncertainty and as much I can I want to reassure students that we will do everything we can to ensure that all students receive the grades that they deserve.

The link to information released by government is here should you wish read to detail

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

Finally, I am aware that the academic year ended very abruptly for Year 11 and Year 13 students and that they did not have time to celebrate with friends and staff the culmination of 5 and in some cases 7 years of hard work and association with Shireland. Again, I would like to reassure you that as soon as is possible we will create an opportunity for you to come in and celebrate your achievements. It is really important to us that you do not miss out on opportunities that would ordinarily have been available to you where possible.

We will continue to communicate with you as soon as we have updates and, in the meantime, I suggest that you continue to access live lessons. Please email your teacher or Head of Department if you have any access issues.

Kind regards



Mr D Irish  
**Principal**

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