

Headteacher: **Mr P. Quirk**

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Co-op Academy  
Failsworth

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Dear Year 11 and Parents/Carers of Year 11

I am really sorry about the forced closure of the Academy and unprecedented disruption you are experiencing in the final stages of your education with us. As you will appreciate, none of us have had any experience of anything like the current situation to draw upon. Developments this week have moved so quickly that information I have sent out has become out of date overnight. Indeed, at one point, it was out of date within hours, due to the stream of new announcements by the government. I really do appreciate your patience and I understand you are frustrated.

Whilst it is not completely clear, you may have had your last lessons with us. If this proves to be the case you will have missed the chance to complete some of the final events we always provide for Year 11. I appreciate some of you will be angry, upset or frustrated with this and I am asking for your understanding. I will come back to these events at a later time; my main priority now is to ensure you have a clearer picture of what may happen as a result of the cancelled exam series this Summer.

I have received some provisional guidance outlining the proposals for the summer with regard to the awarding of grades. This was released on Friday 20th March.

This is the link to full advice:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced?utm\\_source=96f31727-1fb9-408b-a7fa-d91d4ceaeb6b&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced?utm_source=96f31727-1fb9-408b-a7fa-d91d4ceaeb6b&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

From this government guidance, Ofqual will work with the exam boards in order to interpret this information and in turn they will inform the Academy of the information required to generate exam grades. In addition, Ofqual working with exam boards, will outline what will happen if parents/carers and/or students wish to appeal against the grades awarded. At this stage there is no concrete information I can give you. Everything I have, you now have and it is in the document link above. This probably creates more questions than answers but we need to give the relevant bodies time to put this together. I am confident they will create a fair, yet robust system over the next few days and weeks.

Here are some of the headlines I have picked out from the guidance, that you may find useful:

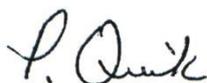
- ***This year's summer exam series, including A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications, and all primary assessments, have been cancelled as we fight to stop the spread of coronavirus.***
- ***This means ensuring GCSE, A and AS level students are awarded a grade which fairly reflects the work that they have put in. There will also be an option to sit an exam early in the next academic year for students who wish to. Ofqual 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 the exam boards to ensure this is consistently applied for all students. The 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 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. The 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.***
- ***The aim is to provide these calculated grades to students before the end of July. In terms of a permanent record, the grades will be indistinguishable from those provided in other years. We will also aim to ensure that the distribution of grades follows a similar pattern to that in other years, so that this year's students do not face a systematic disadvantage as a consequence of these extraordinary circumstances.***
- ***We recognise that some students may nevertheless feel disappointed that they haven't been able to sit their exams. If they 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.***

My advice at present is keep working at home. I cannot give you any other advice until we receive more guidance and gain a clearer picture of the current situation. If you have continued to work at home during this period as we have advised, but feel the grades awarded by the exam boards in the summer are not accurate, you appear to have the chance to appeal this and sit a series of exams to gain a stronger grade.

It appears mock grades and predictions are going to be crucial and we have been accurate. At the present moment, I do not have a clear idea on what exams boards and Ofqual will do with this information, or how you will be graded. As soon as I have any answers I will let you know. Staff will phone later in the week but they will not have any answers to exam arrangement questions.

I appreciate this is a difficult time and we will support you as much as we can. Please keep yourselves safe and follow all the previous advice I have sent out with regard to Coronavirus.

Yours sincerely



Phill Quirk  
Headteacher