



12th March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

What a great week! You would not believe how good it is to have all the students back in school, seeing them in lessons and out and about at break times. Their presence brings a real energy to the school, something we have missed over lockdown. Attendance has been really good as well, so thank you for your support in sending them in. Testing has also gone well, and I continue to be impressed with how seriously everyone is taking them.

Year 7 Parents Evening

Our Year 7 virtual parents evening event is taking place on 25th March 2021. Please ensure your child has made the appointments you need in their student planner, with their subject teachers.

Year 11 Summer Assessments

As you will be aware, it was announced by the government that GCSE examinations will not be taking place this summer. Instead, schools will assess the standard at which your child is performing in each subject that they study, based on what they have been taught.

Below is a summary of the key information we currently know. We are waiting for further information from the exam boards and the trust after which we can finalise arrangements and inform you.

How will we decide your child's grade in each subject?

- **Students with SEND** - for any student with special educational needs and/ or a disability, we will provide appropriate support and reasonable adjustments to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in the summer assessments.
- **Teaching** - we will continue to teach your child in every subject they study throughout the spring/ summer term. Final grades are due into the exam board by Friday 18th June.
- **Grade judgements** - these will be made from a range of evidence relating to the subject content that your child has been taught throughout the course e.g. mock exams, homework or in-class tests (this can include work completed remotely during lockdown).
- **Summer assessment tasks** - in addition to using evidence that we already have, we will undertake a number of assessments with your child over the summer term, and these will include using materials provided to us by the exam boards.
- **Non-exam assessment** - where a subject includes coursework or a practical element, this will still contribute towards your child's overall grade.

How will we ensure that the grades are awarded fairly?

- **OAT guidance for schools** - the Trust will provide every school with a clear framework to work to, in order to determine your child's final grade in each subject.



- **Assessed tasks** – to allow them to prepare fully, each subject that your child studies will inform them in advance which pieces of work will count towards their final grade.
- **Exam board guidance** – each exam board will provide subject specific guidance and materials for us to use in our summer assessments.
- **Quality assurance** – the school, Trust and exam boards will all undertake rigorous checks and moderation to ensure that consistent judgements are being made about which grade/s your child receives.

How will vocational qualifications such as BTECs be assessed?

- **Grade judgements** - these will be made from a range of evidence including performance tasks and assessments that your child has already completed.
- **Results** – your child should receive their result no later Thursday 12th August 2021.

When I speak to students, they are often surprised when I say that they will carry their results from Year 11 exams - and later on too, in college or sixth form - for the rest of their lives. The example I give is my own experience of having to write down the qualifications I achieved in 1974 when applying for jobs right up until my very last application only a few years ago. In short it means that all the work done and the resulting achievements at school, will have an influence for a very long time. It is for this very reason that we are working incredibly hard to personalise learning in lessons, so that all our students are able to fill any gaps in skills and knowledge from lockdown. It is not a bad payback; work hard for 5 years and, given that young people will not retire until their late 60s, they will reap the benefit for the next 50. It is also worth remembering that all the work done, right from the first day in Year 7, adds up to the final exams in Year 11, so it is more of a marathon than a sprint.

Student fatigue

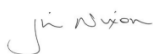
A number of students are reporting to be extremely tired. I urge parents to please encourage children back into a normal bedtime routine, to ensure they get plenty of sleep as they transition back into school life.

On a personal note, this weekend we are moving to a temporary new house, so there will be lots of unpacking of boxes and moving furniture. When we were deciding what to throw out, I came across an old photograph of my boys (then aged 4 and 6) playing in snow. I happened to have taken a photograph of them in the same spot a few weeks ago when it was snowing (they are now aged 30 and 28) so I sent them both photos and they loved it. Our house moving is an unusual situation, as it means that I will be living quite a distance from school, some 150 miles. However, as before, I will be staying in a hotel midweek so that I can continue to work hard for everyone at Ormiston Denes and make sure that we do our very best for your child.

Have a fantastic weekend and if you have a few minutes, why not have a look at some old photographs and relive some great memories.

Please continue to stay safe and remember we remain in a national lockdown, for now.

Yours faithfully



Jim Nixon
Principal