



# Hulme Hall Grammar School

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An independent co-educational school accredited by the Independent Schools Council

27<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Dear Year 11 Parents, Carers and Students

## Re GCSEs

As we approach the end of the first week of remote learning, I wanted to write to you to reassure you that all the staff at Hulme Hall are here to support you as we move into what is clearly uncharted territory for us all. I have today written to all parents at the school but wanted to write a separate letter to Year 11 pupils and parents as I am sure you feel that you are somewhat in limbo at the moment.

## To Our Year 11 Pupils

I would like to begin by addressing myself to the pupils, although I am sure parents would find this information useful too. We, as your teachers, are asking you to complete work, but the Government has just told you that you do not have to sit your GCSE examinations in the summer. So, quite understandably, you are thinking why should I complete the work, what is in it for me?

As I said, I understand that you might hold this view, but I think there are several reasons that you should continue to complete the work set by your teachers. Firstly, we are still not clear exactly how your grades will be awarded, but below is a brief extract from the information we have received so far.

“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.” (AQA)

Completing the work set in the coming weeks to the best of your ability may provide your subject teacher with vital evidence they can use when offering a judgement about your grade to the examination boards.

Secondly, the Government have made it clear that in their efforts to ensure that no student is disadvantaged, if you are unhappy or disagree with the grades you have been awarded, you will have the opportunity to sit the examinations early in the next academic year. Should you be in that position, you will be much better placed to take these examinations if you continue to take your studies seriously in the next couple of months.

Thirdly, many of you have secured places on competitive courses to begin in September. These could be A Level or BTEC courses, and you will be in a much stronger position to begin your courses if you work well now. You may have found GCSEs challenging, but many believe the two sixth form years to be the toughest academically (and I speak as a former Head of Sixth Form), so you do not want to start at college behind your peers.

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I realise that continuing to work hard now will be a test of your commitment to your studies and of your self-discipline. It would be easy to pack your books away until September, but I think that would be a mistake and I would not be doing my job if I didn't warn you of the pitfalls of doing just that.

## To Our Year 11 Parents

To the parents – I hope you share my sentiments regarding the importance of your child continuing with academic study at this time, but you may well be faced with the difficult task of motivating your son / daughter to get down to work. They have, after all, had the goalposts taken away from them, never mind moved!

All I can say is that teachers will be here to offer as much help and support as they possibly can in the coming weeks. They will continue to set work via the SMHW app and can be contacted via the app or e-mail by both pupils and parents alike.

I would also like to reassure parents that we do not expect you to take on the role of the teacher here. Obviously, you will want to help organise, encourage and assist your child wherever possible, but please remember the teachers are available throughout the school day to offer advice and support.

If parents have more general concerns relating to workload, you can contact your child's form tutor, or if you need some pastoral advice, Mrs Conway (Pastoral Manager) would be only too willing to help. Mrs Spragg (SENCO) and Mrs Gately (Enrichment) are also available to help pupils who may face extra challenges in terms of organising and prioritising their work.

Whilst we have suggested the structure of keeping to the normal school day, you as parents will know what works best for your son / daughter. So, if you feel it would be more appropriate to build in some time spent in the garden (especially while the sun is shining) or to walk the dog for example, then so be it.

Please find the routine that works best for you and your family and try to keep a balance. Yes, we want the students to work hard and complete the work set but we know that not all of them will be able to complete every piece of work in the time available. Mental health and wellbeing are important too, especially in the current situation.

I would like to wish you and your family continued good health and please remember we are available should you need any assistance.

Yours sincerely,



**Dean Grierson**  
**Headmaster**