



5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

In all things faithful

Dear Parent/Carer,

### Update regarding Year 11 exams

I write the following after the announcement last night to clarify some of the points made regarding the education of Year 11 pupils, and in particular the reference to GCSE exams. I have used headings for ease of readability.

### Year 11 return to school

Due to the National Lockdown, Year 11 pupils will not return to school as planned on the 11<sup>th</sup> January. Sadly, I cannot give a date of when they will return.

### Exams in January [Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January]

The government has stated the following in relation to GCSE and Vocational examinations:

- *"In the circumstances, we do not think it is possible for all exams in the summer to go ahead as planned. We will accordingly be working with Ofqual to consult rapidly to put in place alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly".*
- *"Public exams and vocational assessments scheduled to take place in January will go ahead as planned".*

As a result of this pupils taking exams in January should attend the planned revision sessions on Microsoft Teams [See below] and come into school by 8.50am as planned in full school uniform with the correct writing equipment. They will leave the school once the exam is over. On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January examinations are planned for BTEC Construction & BTEC Music.

### Revision for the exams in January

There is planned revision for these pupils to help them with their preparations for the exams. Mrs D'Rozario will facilitate a live revision session for Construction pupils over Teams on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 3.15pm – 4pm and then a socially distanced face to face session in school on Thursday morning at 8.15am prior to the exam. Miss Williams will be holding 2 revision sessions for Music students on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 3.15pm – 4pm over Teams. It is important that your child attends these revision sessions as they will be pivotal to their success.

### Further BTEC examinations are planned for February 2021

There are further planned exams in February. These are; Sport on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February and Child Development on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February. Pupils must continue to work hard and prepare for these examinations. If there are any changes, we will inform pupils and parents as soon as we can.

### Summer Examinations

The current guidance, as it stands, does **not** state that examinations will not take place. It is, therefore, crucial that Year 11 pupils are fully engaged in learning, attend all live lessons online and that they complete any work set to the best of their ability.

**St Damian's RC Science College**

Lees Road  
Ashton-under-Lyne  
OL6 8BH

**Tel:** 0161 330 5974

**Fax:** 0161 331 4744

**Email:** [admin@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:admin@stdamians.co.uk)

**Web:** <http://www.stdamians.co.uk/>

**Follow us on Twitter:** @StDamiansRCSC

**Find us on Facebook**

**Headteacher**

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), M.Ed., NPQH

St. Damian's RC Science College

It is possible that a further announcement may be made and that Ofqual decide to implement a form of centre assessed grades, similar to last year. This will further increase the importance the high-quality work being produced by pupils during remote learning as the assessment of the pupil work will contribute to the final GCSE grades alongside mock examination grades and attitude to learning. At St. Damian's there will be no grade inflation for any child or any subject and the process for the award of centre assessed grades will be robust. It is essential during this time that your child fully understands this.

Last year where pupils did not work hard, centre assessed grades reflected this. Due to the robust process in place, no appeals against centre assessed grades were upheld. Judgements for centre assessed grades were based strictly on the evidence of the work produced by the pupils and the DFE guidelines. The simple message is clear: Year 11 pupils must continue to work hard and submit high quality work to their teachers in all subjects.

### Remote Learning

It is important that pupils engage in their learning and attend all events scheduled, such as form tutor time and assemblies. In this morning's important assembly only 123 pupils logged in to hear key messages. As a school we track pupils who are engaged in online learning as it helps to build a picture of pupil commitment in case we have to give a teacher assessment grade. A pupil's online learning may form part of their final grades.

### Mock Examination Results and Year 11 Reports

Year 11 mock examination results will be published and posted as planned on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January alongside a letter with further guidance on how your child can progress further. Year 11 Reports will be posted on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January.

### Well-being of Year 11 Pupils

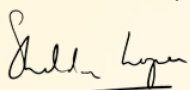
I acknowledge that this is understandably an unsettling time for Year 11 pupils. As a parent you can help Year 11 pupils remain positive and keep focused. Please support your child by encouraging them to stick to good online work routines and ensure that they communicate any questions or queries about the work to their subject teachers via Teams using the chat facility. Reassure them that whatever system is used, grades will be fair. They have every opportunity to improve their grades from their mock examinations and they have full control over that, starting with the remote learning that they will do this week. Please ensure that your child continues to exercise, relax, eat healthily and that they talk to you about any concerns. This helps to reduce any day-to-day stress and anxiety.

St. Damian's prides itself on its pastoral care, and, as such, your child should engage in the online assemblies and form time activities on offer. If you have any further concerns about your child, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Form Tutor. Please keep school informed if your child becomes unwell.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to say that both my staff and I reluctantly accept that these decisions have had to be made. Nonetheless, it is no less disappointing as we believe that they are a fantastic year group. The mantra for all Year 11 pupils should be

*'Keep working hard at remote learning. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. You will be back in school soon to continue working towards the qualifications that you deserve'.*

Yours sincerely



Mr Logue

Headteacher