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29 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Updated information for Year 11 Students and Parents

St Thomas More Sixth Form

GCSE and Vocational results are to be released by examination boards as planned on Thursday 20th August. Our entry requirements will remain the same: at least four Grade 4s for our vocational courses and at least five Grade 5s for most A Levels, although some require at least a Grade 6. All students who have applied to Sixth Form and achieve the required grades will be given a place in our Sixth Form.

Year 11 students had Sixth Form IAG interviews prior to the school's closure so students should be mindful of the advice given about appropriate choices that would balance challenge, enjoyment and success.

In my email last week I signposted work to support students returning to STM, or indeed intending to continue to study elsewhere, to secure their existing knowledge and understanding of their chosen subjects. Please can I again encourage them to complete this work over the next few weeks.

Level 3 Step Up work will become available after May half term, somewhat earlier than planned. This work alongside the final awarded GCSE grade will provide evidence of a commitment and an ability to study that particular subject, or related subjects. The Step up work may also help some students make a final decision about subject choices.

Finally, if you did not submit an initial application but would now like to apply to study at STM (providing it is the most suitable next step for you) an on-line form can be found in the student section of our sixth form website.

If you have any questions about Sixth Form please contact Mrs Hallam via info@stmacademy.org.uk

College and Apprenticeship Applications

Mrs Gammack has continued to email information about Colleges and Apprenticeships to Year 11 students and our Connexions Advisor, Lee Pattison has been in direct contact with some students. If you have any questions or need support in your applications please contact Mrs Gammack via info@stmacademy.org.uk

Awarding of KS4 Qualifications

As you know on 3rd April the Government and Ofqual outlined the process by which grades for GCSE, A Level and EPQ qualifications would be awarded this year. Since then, Ofqual confirmed that the same principles will be followed for our Vocational Qualifications. The guidance was clear about what information schools need to provide

and gave some advice on the ways in which schools might approach it but schools were to determine the exact processes by which they would do this.

Schools are required to provide Centre Assessment Grades for all students and a Rank Order of students for each grade for each qualification. The Ofqual guidance defined the Centre Assessment Grades in the following way: "These should be fair, objective and carefully considered judgements of the grades schools and colleges believe their students would have been **most likely** to achieve if they had sat their exams, and should take into account the full range of available evidence."

Leaders in school have been working on our processes since 3rd April and last week Departments began the process (the likely deadline for information submission is 29th May). From working with Departments, I am confident that we will be able to arrive at the grade judgements that will best reflect the **most likely** outcomes that our students would have achieved, had exams gone ahead this summer.

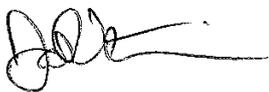
As I have said previously, the guidance makes clear that schools should not share their grade judgments with students or parents before the official calculated results are released in the summer so please can I remind you that it is inappropriate for any student or parent to contact a teacher directly to express a view or indeed attempt to influence the grade the school may put forward in its judgement.

Once schools submit the Centre Assessed Grades and Rank Order the exam boards will apply a standardisation process that will produce a Calculated Grade for each student in each qualification. **This is the grade that Exam Boards will award students on 20th August.** The aim of the standardisation process is described by Ofqual as follows: "if grading judgements in some schools and colleges appear to be more severe or generous than others, exam boards will adjust the grades of some or all of those students upwards or downwards accordingly." Ofqual proposes that exam boards take into account "the prior attainment of students at each school (at cohort, not individual level), and the results of the school in recent years." It also proposes that trends in school performance are not taken into account.

Once results are issued by the Exam Boards Ofqual proposes that there will be limited grounds for appeal. It is proposing that there will be no right of appeal against a school's professional judgement on grades or rank order or the standardisation process, rather the only appeals would be about incorrect data being used, data applied wrongly or inaccurate information going to the exam board. Instead Ofqual propose that students who feel they would have achieved better grades will have the opportunity to take exams in the Autumn. Both the Autumn grade and the Summer calculated grade will stand (if they are different then obviously the student will use the better of the two).

I know that while your children and you will still be anxious about the grades that they will receive in the summer but please can I again reassure you that staff at St Thomas More will do everything we can to ensure that all students are awarded the correct grades.

Yours sincerely



Mr D Watson
Headteacher