



Great Marlow School

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HEADTEACHER: Mr K Ford

DEPUTY HEADTEACHERS

Mr G Pendlebury

Mr N Maguire

Friday 19th June 2020

Dear student,

I hope that you are well and that you have been coping with the restrictions of the lockdown procedure and the uncertainty that you may have had regarding your GCE and BTEC qualifications.

We are rapidly coming to the point in the school calendar when you should have been taking your final GCE and BTEC examinations. As a result, I thought it would be a good opportunity to give you an update about what we have been working on at GMS in terms of your Centre Assessed Grades, encourage you to prepare for the next academic year and let you know about what I have planned as a replacement for your final leavers' assembly.

Your Centre-Assessed Grades (CAGs) are the grades that, in teachers' professional judgement, are 'the most likely grades a student would have achieved if exams had gone ahead'.

GMS staff have taken the decisions about these grades extremely seriously. We know how hard students have worked and how important these results are to them and we want to get it right. The CAGs have been based on a range of evidence of student performance over the course of study. Any access arrangement or special consideration that a student would have been entitled to has been taken into account.

We have worked hard to make the process fair, rigorous and objective, with no single teacher deciding grades for a subject. Grades (and rank order within each grade) have been scrutinised by middle and senior leaders as well as by an external non-profit organisation, the Fischer Family Trust, which supports schools in analysing performance data. After a half-term of work determining the CAGs, we finally submitted those for GCSE and A Level by Friday 12th and the vocational grades by Friday 19th. We are forbidden to share these CAGs with parents or students.

The second stage of the process is the statistical standardisation of the CAGs by the exam boards, overseen by Ofqual. Standardisation will consider the expected national distribution of results as well as historical evidence of centre performance, given the prior attainment of our students. CAGs may be altered by exam boards during standardisation, although the rank order of students within each subject will not be changed. The grades resulting from this process are known as Calculated Grades / Results. It is these that will be issued to students on:

Thursday August 13th: A / AS Level and Level 3 Vocational

Thursday August 20th: GCSE

We are awaiting the outcome of an Ofqual consultation about the options that will be available to any student who feels strongly that a Calculated Result does not show their true ability in a subject. We hope there will be few students in this position. One possible suggestion is that the student could elect to sit exams relevant to that subject in the autumn term, but we will have a clearer picture when the consultation decisions are published.

By the time that some of you start your degrees in September and October, there is a potential that you may not have completed any academic studies for over 7 months. It is, therefore, extremely important that you take some responsibility for your learning before you begin your chosen degree courses and conduct some independent study. To be a successful university student you will need all of the skills that, I hope, we have helped you to acquire in your time at GMS: taking ownership of your learning, structure and organisation, research skills, motivation, independent study and working consistently over an extended period-of-time. Any work that you can complete between now and the start of your university life, will benefit you hugely once you finally begin. I am aware that the situation with jobs and apprenticeships is still uncertain in this climate. However, the same valuable skills apply to these environments and will ensure success if you demonstrate them when you are called upon to do so.

Finally, I am organising a virtual final assembly for year 13 students. The assembly will take place as a Teams Live event and will run from 12pm on Friday 26th June. You will receive an invitation to this event via email next week, I am very much looking forward to speaking to you all.

I wish you the best of luck with your GCE grades and look forward to seeing you in the very near future.

Yours faithfully,

Mr O.Hollyman
Assistant Headteacher/Head of Sixth Form