

Dear Parents and Carers of Year 11 students

I am writing to you with some information regarding how your child's GCSE grades may be calculated, as I am aware that amidst the current climate of uncertainty, this is causing anxiety and distress at an already challenging time.

Although we do not have full information yet, we have had an update from OfQual, who run all public examinations in England, jointly with the government. The link is below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced?fbclid=IwAR08HbVstqmkDP2efiCzBF3fQZ04So56qXZIBGsiBrtgPhYGBqdhJnKAbok>

We are interpreting this to mean that, for the main, Year 11 students will receive grades based mostly (but perhaps not fully) on teachers' estimations and predictions and we are therefore working hard at Thomas Estley to be ready to best determine this, once we receive further instructions. All work, particularly that supervised during lessons and examinations, will be used to help determine those estimated grades, unless we are told otherwise, including work done more recently. We are keenly aware that while some students follow a gradual flightpath through mocks to their GCSEs, other students work very hard later on in the academic year and have a steeper flightpath towards the end of Year 11, and we will try to take this into account where we can.

Several of you have already contacted us to ask about completing work set on Show My Homework - what is its purpose and is there any point. I would like to make the following points regarding this:

- Any post 16 areas of study should be a priority in completing tasks on Show My Homework, eg if you are going on to study A levels, a break of six months will mean that you are not ready to start the course, or if you are studying Catering at college you will need to keep Food and Science knowledge current and revisited.
- We do not yet know how much recent work we can take into account when calculating expected grades (see above) so while mock exam papers completed at home cannot be used to fully inform grades (uncertainty regarding time taken to complete, whether help was given, etc), we will try to take work into account as part of the bigger picture if we can. There is not yet certainty on this.
- We know that students will be able to resit exams next academic year if they wish to, and so completing work to practise skills and knowledge in case this becomes the case is a very good idea.
- Year Eleven have had many challenges to their wellbeing this year and a structured day, with time spent on academic work as well as physical exercise and wellbeing, will help them through these difficult times with better physical and mental health than they would otherwise have. We will be sharing more ideas in this area with you later.

We will be communicating with you regularly over this period – our students are still part of our Thomas Estley family even though their year was cut short at college, and we want to offer them ongoing support.

- If your child is anxious or uncertain about their next steps post 16, we will set up phone interviews and remote email support from our Careers Advisor Sam White and our Careers Lead Amber Colquhoun, to offer additional support. If this is the case please email careers@thomasestley.org.uk

- We will be collecting achievement comments from staff for each Year 11 student to provide them with additional evidence to take to interviews, etc
- We will be writing to you soon about our full Thomas Estley Year 11 2020 Promise.

Warmest wishes,

Mandi Collins, Principal

Janine Hartley, Year 11 Standards Lead

Liz Knott, Examinations Officer