

Ref: MDS/SJO/SM/cylboex

7 January 2021

Dear Students, Parent/Carer(s)

This letter is written to the students; but it is important, as parent/carer(s), that you are involved in this process.

The Prime Minister announced on Monday evening that with reference to GCSE, AS and A level *"it's not possible or for all exams to go ahead this summer as normal"*. Gavin Williamson confirmed this in a statement in the House of Commons on Wednesday *"Although exams are the fairest way we have of assessing what a student knows, the impact of this pandemic now means that it is not possible to have these exams this year. I can confirm that GCSEs, A-levels and AS-level exams will not go ahead this summer"*.

In the coming weeks, we will receive guidance from the government as to what will be replacing the examinations. We understand that teachers' teacher assessed grades will be used to replace the exams. The Education Secretary stated he would "trust in teachers rather than algorithms", a reference to problems in last year's exam results.

Currently the government has been less clear about what will happen with vocational qualifications like BTECs and the OCR qualifications taken in ICT and business. They are presently going ahead as planned (although the school has made the decision to cancel the January/February exams, students effected by this have been written to). Due to the nature of vocational courses, students may be expected to complete all the coursework elements of their course. This would normally be sent to a standards verifier as part of the moderation process, at the present time there is no indication this will not happen. This means students will be set a final deadline by their teacher when all the coursework will need to be completed by.

This means teachers will have to assess students using the evidence base they have; this will include:

- a. Work completed in school
- b. Homework completed (when school is open as normal)
- c. Work completed via remote learning; when the school is closed or when students are in a period of isolation.
- d. Coursework
- e. Centre Assessments (currently those completed in November)

The school was planning on completing another round of centre assessments directly after the February half term; these will be put on hold but will probably happen later in the year. I am aware of the shock, disappointment and possible anxiety this week's news will be bringing. Students went through a similar process last year and all students from those year groups have progressed to the next point on their career journey. I urge you to consider the following points:

1. Your hard work will still be recognised. None of the effort you have shown so far will have been wasted. On the contrary, the system we will be using will make sure the quality of the work you complete will be fully reflected in your final grade. You also need to think about a concerted effort to provide your teachers with the evidence they need to recognise your potential in their subjects. During the year, we have been talking to you about providing your teachers with this evidence base. This means it **is** vitally important that you complete the work set by your teachers on the remote learning

system to the best of your ability. You must contact your teachers if you are experiencing issues with accessing the work or understanding it.

2. Different to last year, we are fully expecting a return to school before the end of the academic year. Again, this is when more evidence can be provided and small gaps in your learning from the remote work can be filled; if need be.

3. The system which is used will be fair and balanced. Grades will be awarded based on objective evidence. This process has been on going all year. Any grades that your teachers give you will be carefully moderated to ensure they are consistent within our school and nationally. If any student or parent/carer were to be disappointed with their eventual grade, we expect there will be a mechanism to complete a follow up exam in autumn as there was this year.

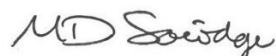
I know we are asking a lot for you to fully take on board all the points in this letter and also to keep diligently completing all the work which is set, but you must in order to fulfil your potential and progress into a career of your choice.

You are not the first year group to go through this and once you have had time to process the information you will realise that you will be fine. Eventually, the results you have will be indistinguishable from other student's grades. Importantly we want you to move onto the next step of your career with the grades you deserve. The only way of doing this is to provide the teachers with the evidence to award the grade your ability and effort means you deserve.

You know that your tutors, teachers and the pastoral staff are only an email away; we can help you with whatever the issues you might be experiencing. You need to think about completing your applications to the next step. In terms of post-16 education, the recruitment and application period has now started for Millom Sixth form and other colleges. Information regarding the sixth form at Millom School can be accessed via the school website. Mr Nunn is the Director of Learning for Key Stage 5 and will be happy to talk through any queries. Application information will also be on the school website. The application windows have opened for the major apprenticeship providers in the area; such as BAE Systems and GEN II.

For the next few months it is vitally important that you turn up to **online lessons via teams, complete work set on OneNote, complete all work set when we return to school, revise for any centre assessments** and know that **every piece of work you complete will make a difference to your overall grade.**

Yours faithfully



M D Savidge
Headteacher



S J Olliver
Director of Learning and Standards KS4