



Ref:EMM/Y13

January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

Year 13 Update

As you are undoubtedly aware, there have been a number of announcements this week with reference to the summer exam session for AS and A levels.

We wanted to write to you all to give you the latest information we have. Please note there are many decisions that still need to be taken by the government, Ofqual and the exam boards with regards to awarding grades and we will continue to closely monitor this and update when possible.

We ran a virtual assembly with all year 13 students yesterday via MS Teams to check in with them, give a little information and also give them the opportunity to ask questions. From next week I am planning on running weekly assemblies on MS Teams for students as well so that we can speak to them in person regularly to keep them updated. Please remember that both myself and Mrs Littler are available should students or yourselves have any questions at any time.

We have reminded students to be frequently checking their school emails as well, as we will be using this to inform them of information alongside Satchel One. The Sixth Form page of the school website (<https://plymstockschool.org.uk/sixth-form/>) will be updated with further information including remote learning guidance.

Our main point in yesterday's assembly was to inform students of the importance with continuing to complete all the remote learning work that is being set by staff. We are committed to delivering the full courses for all subjects to all students to ensure they receive the knowledge they require for their qualifications and to use these for the next steps in their lives, whether this be university, apprenticeship or work. Staff in the school will be delivering lessons for all students to ensure courses are completed.

We are also planning on continuing with formal assessments, and are currently looking at how we can do this remotely. We are also planning assessments for when students return to school, in order to build the evidence available to us to support our centre assessed grades. We are hoping this also gives students the comfort to know they have the ability to increase their predicted grades that were set in the latest progress checks sent in the autumn term.

This all highlights the importance of a continuing engagement with the remote learning taking place. We will be closely monitoring student's engagement in lessons and tasks to help us further build the evidence to support predicted grades. Parents/carers will be contacted where we have concerns regarding students work.

We are also looking at ways to continue the other opportunities we would normally run with students during their time in sixth form to help develop their skills as whole people.



For your information, the statement released by OfQual on Wednesday 6 January reads:

We know that this is a difficult time for students, their parents and carers, teachers and trainers. Our message to students is this: please continue to engage as fully as you can in your education. That will be online for the majority of students, or face-to-face for those students still going in to their school, college or training provider. This will put you in the best position, whatever arrangements are made for your qualifications. It's important that teachers and students can focus on the knowledge and skills needed to equip students to progress to the next stage, whatever form that might take – whether to college, an apprenticeship, university or employment.

The way ahead is not straightforward: exams and standardised assessments are the fairest way of determining what a student knows and can do. We need to consider a wide range of qualifications – from A levels and GCSEs to many different vocational and technical qualifications – and the solution won't be the same for all. Following the government's announcement on Monday evening, we also need to consider how alternative arrangements will work for different students, including those who are independent learners. We are discussing alternative arrangements with the Department for Education. We know that many are seeking clarity as soon as possible. We will provide further updates as soon as we can.

The government has announced that schools and colleges can continue with the vocational and technical exams due to take place in January where it is right to do so. This may be particularly important for vocational and technical qualifications which require a 'licence to practise', which can only be fulfilled through practical assessment.

Simon Lebus, Interim Chief Regulator, Ofqual

Can we also take this opportunity to thank you all for the continued support you are providing to your child to help them complete their remote learning and for getting through this difficult and uncertain time, they may not tell you personally but what you do matters!

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully



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