



Wednesday 16th December 2020

In this letter:

COVID-19 Positive Cases/requirement to self-isolate over the Christmas holidays	All parents and carers
Post 16 Sixth Form Provision	Parents and carers of Year 11 students
Students taking examinations in summer 2021	Parents and carers of Year 11 & 13 students

Dear Parents, Carers (& Students),

I hope this finds you well?

Firstly, thank you for your support of the school response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At times it has felt that letters sent home have almost solely focussed on detailing arrangements for our work in school under COVID-19 restrictions. That said, I am very proud that the school has been able to remain open throughout the Autumn term to offer our full curriculum to all students.

We also recognise the additional pressures that government guidance has placed on families when students have either tested positive or have been required to self-isolate. Your support has not gone unrecognised and we are truly grateful for this. Over the course of the academic year so far school colleagues have worked with extreme diligence to ensure that when a member of our school community has tested positive for COVID-19 we follow the government guidance of identifying close contacts and notifying them of their responsibility to self-isolate, often doing this notification late in the evening and at weekends.

As we come to the end of this term, it is important that we continue to work together during the holiday period to ensure any positive COVID-19 cases are handled with the same level of care in order to protect our students and also our wider school community and families. We have, therefore, put the following procedure in place to allow for this to happen.

Thank you again for your on-going support, and best wishes for the festive season.

Regards,

Andrew Parkinson
Headteacher

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All parents and carers

A. If your child receives a positive COVID-19 test result from Saturday 19th December 2020 – Thursday 24th December 2020, please follow the following procedure:

Go to the school website at: <https://tgs.starmat.uk/>

On the homepage, click on the sliding tile (see below) and complete the notification form.



A message will then be sent to the duty staff. Please expect a phone call shortly after submitting your form.

The notification form is also available [HERE](#)

B. If your child receives a positive COVID-19 test result from Friday 25th December 2020 – Monday 4th January 2021, please follow the following procedure:

Procedure as detailed above in **Section A**

You are not required to complete the CLOSE CONTACT DETAILS section of the form.

C. If your child is required to self-isolate at any point from Tuesday 22nd December 2020 – Monday 4th January 2021 (and this isn't as a result of the school informing you of the need to do this), please follow the following procedure:

Procedure as detailed above in **Section A** only if your child subsequently receives a positive COVID-19 test.

We really do hope that we all manage to have a Covid 19-free holiday and that this procedure is not needed. However, we believe that it's always prudent to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

Parents and carers of Year 11 students

Post 16 Sixth Form Provision.

At this point in the year it is an extremely exciting time for our Year 11 students; not only is it time to focus on their final Key Stage 4 work, it is also time to explore their Post 16 choices and options.

I hope you enjoyed our virtual open evening which can still be found on our website and that the students thoroughly enjoy their taster lessons this Thursday. This will give them an insight into being a Level 3 student and enthuse them to study subjects at a deeper level. We are very proud to be able to offer a wide range of A Level and Btec courses which will be appropriate for the needs and aspirations of any students wishing to study with us. I hope over this festive break you can find some time to discuss the subjects your child would like to apply for in our Sixth Form. Please take time to browse our curriculum offer and consider the broad and varied subjects we offer. [Click here for our Prospectus](#)

Throughout this term we have been able to deliver face to face lessons for all our students in the Sixth Form as well as them receiving bespoke tutoring helping them through the UCAS, apprenticeship and employment process. This continuous access to subject specialists means students know they are fully supported here in the Sixth Form in all areas of their life.

I am sorry I have not been able to meet you in person this year but I look forward to receiving your child's Sixth Form application [Click here for Sixth Form application form](#). If you have any questions please contact me on r.knapton@tgs.starmat.uk.

Best wishes to you and your families over this festive season.

Ros Knapton

Assistant Headteacher: Director of Sixth Form

Parents and carers of Year 11 & 13 students

Students taking examinations in summer 2021

We have received confirmation from the Department for Education that exams will go ahead in summer 2021. Advanced Level and GCSE exams will be delayed by 3 weeks to give pupils more time to catch up on their learning. For Year 11 and Year 13 on summer 2021:

- Grading will be more generous than usual, in line with national outcomes from 2020, so students are not disadvantaged;
- Students will receive advance notice of some topic areas covered in GCSE, AS and A levels to focus revision;
- Exam aids - like formula sheets - will be provided in some exams giving students more confidence and reducing the amount of information they need to memorise;
- Additional exams will be available to give students a second chance to sit a paper if the main exams or assessments are missed due to illness or self-isolation; and
- A new expert group will look at the variation in the impact of the pandemic on students across the country.

The main exam series will start on 7th June 2021, just after the May half-term, and end on 2nd July 2021. There is also now a Contingency Period for exams from 28th June 2021, ending on 16th July 2021

A letter addressed to students about the exams from Secretary of State, Gavin Williamson is also attached. I hope you have the confidence in the school to know that all staff will do everything they can to support students taking external examinations during 2021.



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State

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3 December 2020

To students taking exams 2021

I am writing to you today because I know that you have faced unprecedented disruption to your education this year due to the pandemic.

Exams can be daunting at the best of times, but a global pandemic has the potential to make exams in 2021 even more challenging. I know that many of you have lost a substantial amount of time at school or college due to the pandemic and that you are working hard to catch-up.

On that basis, some of you might think that we should cancel exams next year and I sympathise with that viewpoint. However, I think that would be the wrong thing to do. Let me explain why.

Whilst they are stressful, exams are the best way for you to demonstrate what you know and can do. They offer you a fair, independent opportunity to demonstrate your abilities and give you control over your future and what you can achieve.

I previously announced that exams will go ahead next year – with most AS, A levels and GCSEs starting three weeks later than normal. This will provide you with some extra time to learn and revise for your exams – which I hope will help you to catch-up on some of the learning that you may have missed.

Today I am announcing additional measures that will help you to prepare for exams and hopefully make them less daunting. These measures will reflect the disruption you have experienced, ensure that exams are as fair as possible and enable you to get the qualifications that you deserve to progress to the next stage in your lives.

Measures to support you in your learning

We know that you have faced challenges this year that students would not normally have to deal with. Therefore, the exams regulator, Ofqual has determined that grading for 2021 GCSE, AS and A level exams will be aligned with the outcomes from 2020, meaning that you will not be disadvantaged relative to grades awarded this summer. Ofqual is also working to ensure that there is a fair approach across vocational and technical qualifications.

To help you best focus your efforts between now and the exams, awarding organisations will give you and your teachers advance notice of some of the topics to be covered in your exam papers. This will help you focus on these areas and target your revision in the run up to exams. For some subjects, exam support materials will be available to you on the day of exams (such as formulae sheets) – so you will not need to memorise all the information you normally would. Ofqual will publish further details on this in the spring term.

For those of you taking vocational and technical qualifications, we are announcing further flexibilities to reduce the number of assessments for many qualifications. This will free up time for you to focus on the areas you need to.

All these measures are designed to make sure that exams are as fair as possible and to maximise your opportunity to do well in them. I intend for as many of you as possible to be able sit exams in the usual way. However, we have planned for all eventualities and we are putting a range of contingency measures in place for anyone who could be affected by the pandemic.

Contingency measures for exams 2021

We are exploring how coronavirus testing developments can help to ensure that you can sit your exams safely, should you otherwise need to self-isolate. If you legitimately miss one or all your exams in a subject due to the pandemic, there will still be ways for you to obtain a qualification.

If you legitimately miss one or more of your assessments, but had completed a sufficient proportion of a qualification, then the existing special consideration process will be used to award a grade.

If you legitimately miss all your exam papers in a GCSE, AS or A Level subject, you will be given an opportunity to sit a contingency paper held shortly after the main summer series, in early July. For the likely small minority of you who might legitimately miss the main series and the contingency paper for a subject, you will have an opportunity to be awarded a grade based on a validated teacher assessment.

A similar approach will be followed for vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications.

Our commitment to making exams fair and safe

I want you to know that everyone in government, from the Prime Minister down, understands the challenges you have experienced this year due to the pandemic.

In this extraordinary year, we are committed to giving you the best opportunity possible to demonstrate your abilities, to get the grades you deserve and to progress to the next stage of your lives.

I would personally like to wish you the very best with your studies and your exams and I look forward to congratulating you all on your achievements come results day.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Williamson', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education