

## Solway Community School

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**SOLWAY COMMUNITY**  
SCHOOL

8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Year 11 students and parents

I am writing to you following the Secretary of State's announcement this week that GCSE exams will not happen in the summer as planned.

This is what he said:

“Another area where we have learned lessons is on exams. Last year, all four nations of the UK found their arrangements for awarding grades did not deliver what they needed, with the impact felt painfully by students and their parents. 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 and A and AS Level exams will not go ahead this summer. This year we are going to put our trust in teachers rather than algorithms.

The department and Ofqual had already worked up a range of contingency options. While the details will need to be fine-tuned in consultation with Ofqual, the exam boards and teaching representatives, I can confirm now that I wish to use a form of teacher-assessed grades, with training and support provided to ensure these are awarded fairly and consistently.”

While we await further guidance from the DfE about exactly what this will look like, it is vitally important that, as I said in September, that teaching staff are building a substantial portfolio of work and evidence for students. Every piece of work and assessment in your books and online is vital if we are to provide accurate grades for you. I hope you will now appreciate why I said that in September, and that you will engage fully in distance learning. Members of the senior leadership team will be dropping into live lessons to make sure that students are working as they should be. Mr Hailwood and I will also be speaking to all students at a virtual assembly next Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> – please make sure you join the meeting.

Tutoring that is already in place will continue and we will be asking tutors to contribute to the assessment process.

Mock exams will continue in March and it is vital that students do as well as they can.

The Year 11 parents' evening on January 14<sup>th</sup> will continue virtually (details to follow) as well as interviews for all students with careers advisors.

I cannot emphasise enough that you **MUST** do the distance learning we are providing, and do it as well as you can, as it will form part of the evidence base on which your GCSE grades will be awarded.

We will do everything we can to support you – the rest is now, more than ever before, down to you. Parents, please support your children to manage in this challenging situation. Call the school offices if you have any questions and we will do our best to help.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Schafer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Judith Schafer  
Executive Headteacher