



# THE JOHN FISHER SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr P E McCullagh BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH

Peaks Hill  
Purley  
Surrey  
CR8 3YP

22nd January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

## **Consultation on How GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021**

On Friday 15th January a consultation on How GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021 was launched. As part of the consultation, Ofqual and the Department for Education want to hear the views of students who were due to take their examinations, their parents and carers, their teachers, school leaders and others who have an interest, including further and higher education providers, and employers. The consultation ends on 29th January 2021.

The A, AS and GCSE consultation sets out 68 questions, and the proposals are that:

- Students would continue with their education during this academic year
- Students would be assessed by their teachers in a period beginning in May and in to early June
- Teachers would submit grades to the exam boards by mid-June
- External quality assurance by the exam boards would be ongoing throughout June
- Results would be issued to students once the QA process is complete, most likely in early July
- Student appeals could be submitted immediately following the issue of results and would first be considered by schools.

For Vocational qualifications, the consultation covers a wide range of VTQ and general qualifications but clarifies that *"From April onwards, written exams for Vocational and Technical qualifications that are taken instead of, or alongside, GCSEs, AS and A levels should not take place. Alternative arrangements will be put in place to award these results,"* meaning the summer exams will be cancelled.

The school will be holding virtual meetings with the parents/carers of Year 11 and Year 13 students once the consultation closes and the final decisions have been made on what is going to take place this summer.

## **Parents Teacher Meetings**

Thank you to all of the parents/carers of Year 13 students who attended our second virtual Parent Teacher Meeting yesterday evening. There will be a survey issued soon by the Sixth Form team to seek your views.

The dates of the other Parents Teacher Meetings taking place this term are:

- Year 12: Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February
- Year 7: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February
- Year 11: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March

## **Lateral Flow Testing**

We received the following statement from the Secretary of State for Education this week:

*'Both NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England (PHE) have now reviewed that advice, and concluded that, in light of the higher prevalence and rates of transmission of the new variant, further evaluation work is required to understand the impact of daily contact testing, instead of self-isolation for those who have been in contact with a case, to make sure it is achieving its aim of breaking chains of transmission and reducing cases of the virus in the community. In light of that assessment, we are pausing daily contact testing in all but a small number of secondary schools and colleges, where it will continue with detailed evaluation to inform any future resumption and to make sure nobody in the remaining settings is put at any risk. Regular testing of staff should continue and will increase to twice weekly as further reassurance and to break chains of transmission during this period.'*

The John Fisher School had not yet started daily contact testing as part of its testing programme. The school will await further guidance before taking any steps regarding serial testing.

## **Wellbeing Wednesday**

Next week, 'Wellbeing Wednesday' will be returning whilst school is closed. This means that there will be no 'live' lessons during P.5 and P.6, instead students will be encouraged to have no screen time and to use this time for exercise, for reading, to spend time with their family members, to reflect, pray etc. Students who would normally have had lessons on a Wednesday afternoon will have work set that can be completed at a different time. There will also be different 'challenge' tasks issued each week, which we would encourage your son to attempt.

## **Use of cameras during 'live' lessons**

We are asking students to turn their cameras on during 'live' lessons, which we hope you will encourage at home. The feedback received from the teachers has been that when cameras are on, there has been much greater engagement, improved responsiveness and much better effort. This use of cameras has been more of a concern with students in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. The teachers have also commented, that teaching to blank screens can be quite demoralizing for them day after day, week after week, particularly when interacting with the students is one of the aspects of their role which they enjoy most.

## **Contacting the school**

Parents/carers who are critical workers or who have a son considered 'vulnerable' and who would like to make an enquiry regarding a place at school during the current closure, should submit their expression of interest no later than 4.00pm on a Thursday for a place the following week.

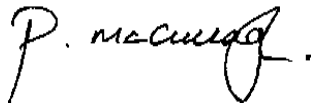
If you are experiencing issues with remote education, please email [remoteducation@johnfisherschool.org](mailto:remoteducation@johnfisherschool.org). If your son is unwell and unable to complete work, please let us know by emailing your son's Key Stage Administrator. If your son has any issues with understanding and completing the classwork set, they should contact their subject teacher via ShowMyHomework explaining the issue. For pastoral concerns, please make contact with your son's Form Tutor in the first instance or his Director of Learning if it is a serious matter. We also have a dedicated email for safeguarding matters ([safeguarding@johnfisherschool.org](mailto:safeguarding@johnfisherschool.org)) and any issues relating to mental health and wellbeing can be sent to [wellbeingsupport@johnfisherschool.org](mailto:wellbeingsupport@johnfisherschool.org).

I will close with the inspiring words of Amanda Gorman from the inauguration this week:

***“There is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it.”***

I think this invocation to be positive and brave is important for all of us during these toughest of times. I will continue to keep you and your family in my prayers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. E. McCullagh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

P E McCullagh  
Headteacher