

9 January 2020

Dear parents, agents and guardians,

Following Monday's announcement by the Prime Minister of a further period of national lockdown in the UK, we have obviously had to change our teaching provision. It is evident that the pandemic situation has changed significantly since Christmas and accordingly, we are now required to close our site to all day students (other than the children of key/critical workers) as part of the UK-wide response to Covid-19 and the impact of the new variant of the virus on public health.

**We have therefore resumed our online learning programme, Padworth Online, for all Year Groups, until February Half Term at the earliest. Our resident students are being supported by those teachers and boarding staff who make up our 'boarding bubble'.** We are expecting further guidance for schools from the Department for Education following Monday's announcement and we will of course share any major updates, as we receive them.

Our online programme is now well established and is very successful in providing excellent academic support and pastoral care for our students. The pandemic has shown us many times that the College community is resilient and that we can respond admirably to whatever comes our way and I am confident that our College community's characteristic creativity and kindness will allow us to do so again.

The Prime Minister's announcement also mentioned some implications for this summer's public examinations, which have now been now cancelled. The Secretary State for Education subsequently made a statement to parliament, regarding the Government's decision to cancel public GCSE and A Level examinations in England. Further details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-statement-to-parliament-on-national-lockdown>

A related statement by Ofqual, the domestic exams regulator, is also available for your information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-message-from-simon-lebus-chief-regulator-on-exams-in-2021>

While there is still a lack of detail on the assessment and grading arrangements that will replace exams in 2021, we thought it would be helpful to highlight some key points from the announcements, as they will inevitably lead to further speculation.

There will be no algorithms used this time and teacher assessment will be involved. However, the announcements did state that Ofqual and the awarding bodies will work with education professionals to produce a fair system of assessment that will reward pupils with the grades that they deserve. We realise that these are disconcerting times for our students and we will do all that we can to ensure that they feel supported and informed. The picture should become clearer over the next week and we will of course update you and your sons and daughters (or the students you are representing) without delay, when there is significant information to pass on.

Please note that whilst the government has announced the cancellation of the public GCSE and A Level examinations, two of the exam boards, Cambridge International and Edexcel, confirmed yesterday that IGCSE examinations will go ahead in private schools in June 2021. We will provide further details on this development in due course.

We are here to help, advise and reassure your sons and daughters, so please do not hesitate to contact us via email if you have any queries about the above. Thank you for your continued support, encouragement and understanding during these extraordinary times. My colleagues and I are very grateful for your messages of support.

Best wishes,



Lorraine Atkins  
Principal