



FOREST HILL SCHOOL

ASPIRING TO EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

SPECIALIST SCHOOL IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

Sent home to Y11 parents/carers via In-Touch on 3/4/2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Year 11 completion of work during school closure

I hope that you and your family are well and that you're managing to adjust to what is a uniquely challenging time. After stating that I would communicate with families once per week I'm writing on what I consider to be a very important matter.

Before I go on, it's important to say that we've been exceptionally pleased with how Year 11 students were working and engaging with GCSE preparations when they were in school. They deserve congratulations and I'm sure they were looking forward to a well-earned break at Easter. They should still take this opportunity, even if it is not quite as they expected it would be.

That having been said, it has become apparent to me that some Year 11 boys now hold the view that, as examinations have been cancelled for this year, there is no reason to carry on completing the work that has been set by teachers. If you've been struggling with a son who has this opinion please pass on the message from me that he is making a huge mistake for the following reasons:

1. The grades he will be awarded by the examination boards will not necessarily be the predicted grades his teachers send to them. There will be a process in which other data is considered (as outlined in my letter to Year 11 parents last week) before a final grade is awarded. The Department for Education have not yet clarified precisely how this process will work. If a student is unhappy with the grades awarded the only realistic way of changing them is to sit a special set of examinations early in the Autumn Term 2020, or alternatively in Summer 2021 with current Year 10 students when they sit GCSEs. The latter choice would not be feasible for most students. Therefore, if a student wishes to sit examinations in the Autumn and has not completed the syllabus and exam preparation work currently being issued by teachers, he would be putting himself at a huge disadvantage which could affect his future.
2. Places on post-16 courses depend on the grades awarded this summer and nothing can be left to chance. If the grades awarded are not sufficient to start a course it may be necessary for a student to sit the Autumn Term examinations to gain higher grades to secure a place. Not having completed syllabus and exam preparation work will severely affect a student's results in such examinations and may lead to them not being able to continue with their chosen course(s).
3. It is entirely possible that Year 11 students will not return to school or college until September. When they do, they will be embarking on demanding post-16 courses which, even under ordinary circumstances, are a large and very challenging step up from GCSEs. If a student has decided that he will not engage with work being set for the remainder of the school year it will leave a five-month void in which no meaningful academic study has taken place. Routine and work ethic would be eroded. I can say with certainty that students who have followed this route will find the rigours of new and more demanding study a significant challenge, and that they would be significantly increasing the chances of not being successful on their chosen courses. After Easter, we intend to begin to provide work which will prepare students more specifically for their chosen post-16 study route. This further reinforces the need to engage with work.



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In some ways the attitude I have described is understandable given the circumstances we find ourselves in. I know that boys may be telling parents that there is no point in working and that no one is doing it. That could not be further from the truth. The vast majority of Year 11 students are engaging positively with work and acting maturely and sensibly. Those who are choosing not to are putting themselves at a significant disadvantage in the next stage of their education.

If you find yourself in this situation with your son we want to support you as soon as possible. Please do not hesitate to email us at office@foresthillschool.co.uk. I, or one of my team are more than happy to speak to you or your son in order to help him realise that engaging with work on a regular basis is the best way to ensure he is well prepared for further study.

Best wishes,

Michael Sullivan
Headteacher