



Dale Avenue, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8LP

Telephone: 01273 845892

Facsimile: 01273 846358

E-mails: office@downlands.w-sussex.sch.uk
head@downlands.w-sussex.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr M Wignall

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Dear Parent/Carer and Year 11 Student

I hope you are all well. I wanted to write to you on a number of important updates and to outline our plans to support students moving forward.

Firstly, I would like to commend the Year 11s for a very positive return to school. Back in July when we conducted our wellbeing survey by far the biggest concern expressed by students was returning to school routines. I am delighted to report this has not proved to be a barrier. In fact, it has been remarkable how the whole school community has adapted to the necessary changes and thrived.

Staff are managing the return to learning, adapting the curriculum where necessary and building up learners' confidence. The pastoral response has been to support students with a focus on strategies to cope with change and we have invested more than ever in supporting students to deal with the challenges ahead. We will be issuing full reports later on in the term and there will be a parents' consultation evening on Thursday 10 December. We will confirm arrangements with you nearer the time.

The governments' recent announcement confirmed its intention to proceed with GCSE exams for Year 11 students. This gives a clear goal that we can now plan towards and removes some of the uncertainty. The provisional exam timetable has been released. Apart from one English and Maths exam before the May half term, all exams start on Monday 7 June, three weeks later than normal. We will share the timetable with you once it has been confirmed. The government is planning further releases detailing contingency plans if students are unable to sit examinations.

We can now put plans in place to support our students for the forthcoming exams to ensure they are performing at their best in the summer. Last year we successfully modelled two formal mock examinations windows. This gave the opportunity for every student to sit all the examination papers required, receive comprehensive feedback and support to make improvements. We intend to use the same model this year, thus maximising the additional time afforded by the delay in the examinations. The first round of mocks will begin in January and last approximately two weeks with a second round in the two weeks preceding Easter. Mock timetables and, if necessary, exam access arrangements will be confirmed and distributed after half term. Rest assured we will be implementing our strategies for performing well in examinations that have proven popular and successful in the past albeit in a different format. These will be a combination of research based effective revision practices and managing exam stress.

We will of course give more detail in due course as it becomes available. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and reassure you that we have an outstanding Year 11 teaching and pastoral team to assist students in achieving their best. Consequently, as in previous years, we expect all students to do exceptionally well in the summer.

Yours faithfully

Mr M Ashdown and the Year 11 team
Deputy Headteacher

