



Dear Parents and Students,

I hope you and your families are all well. Thank you and your children for the overwhelmingly positive engagement with our remote learning programme before the break. Our school's leaders are continuing to meet to respond to what they have learned over that week and to the excellent feedback we have received from students and parents.

On Friday, Ofqual published its advice regarding public examination grades and here is the link once again.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcses-as-and-a-level-awarding-summer-2020>

We remain committed to sharing with you our thinking and advice as it evolves and develops. In that spirit, we offer the following additional advice to the 5th Years and Upper Sixth as an initial response.

1. In determining a grade that each student would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their exams as planned, your teachers will be asked to draw upon a range of evidence about your performance, including "progress review data, classwork, bookwork and/or participation in performances in subjects such as music, drama and PE". The new information from Ofqual makes it clear that the Exam Boards expect schools to view academic data that pre-dates school closure as a sufficient basis for the prediction of Grade outcomes, alongside knowledge of individual children's particular circumstances and trajectories. Equally we know that at Truro School, from one year to the next, our students show good evidence of progress towards their target grades in the days and weeks leading to the exams. Our schemes of work and revision programmes are designed to ensure they peak at right time. Quite understandably, we have been told that no student should be disadvantaged if they are unable to complete any work set after schools were closed. The school wants to convey to you that there is no blanket expectation on students to undertake revision. That said, no student should be disadvantaged by being unable to show objective evidence of progress by completing work after school closure, which allows us to support any student who feels they may wish to demonstrate further progress towards targets. The heads of department are taking this into account in their planning for the summer term.
2. The Ofqual advice makes it clear that school predictions will not be submitted until at least the end of May, leaving time in which individual students might choose to generate further data and hence evidence of progress which the teachers can call upon in making their judgements. We will offer this opportunity, where appropriate, to those who wish to take it without it being enforced upon anyone. Further opportunities, *if appropriate*, will be communicated to students by departments as the Summer term commences and the students will be supported to do so with remotely set assessment style tasks. Our advice to students, therefore, with the pressure of final A Level and GCSE summative exams taken off the table and indeed with no further high stakes testing appropriate, is that their interests are best served by sticking to the routine that we have planned, 'attending' lessons, completing the work that is set by teachers and continuing to demonstrate progress through mini assessment opportunities. This is especially relevant to those students who have been gathering momentum and closing the gap towards their target grades. **Nothing you can do from now on can harm your grade but you can continue to demonstrate progress.**



3. Truro School knows that the consolidation of learning that normally takes place in preparation for exams ensures that students are best placed to make the step to A Levels, other FE courses or Degrees. We are conscious that this year's cohorts are losing that important final opportunity of learning consolidation. We do not want our students to be at a disadvantage at the next steps of their education and would encourage them to fully engage with the learning that the teachers will provide in the first half of the summer term ensuring that the GCSE and A Level courses are completed.
4. Coursework and Non-Examined Assessments. The new guidance makes it clear that students should not be required by schools to complete these tasks if they are currently unfinished. We will not ask any student specifically to do so therefore. However, if students wish to complete any as yet unfinished coursework, either for the academic satisfaction of completing a task they have invested so much time in already, or so that its outcome might potentially act as a supportive evidence to a prediction then they are entitled and encouraged to do so. It certainly allows for the consolidation of learning for progression to the next steps mentioned above and our Heads of department will engage with the students this concerns in each subject area. This is, however, a choice not a requirement.
5. As a school, we cannot offer guarantees over how data generated by taking the opportunities mentioned above will be viewed by the exam boards but we recommend this option to those for whom there is a strong sense that attainment over the last year and a half misrepresents their potential. Ofqual have made it clear that school predictions, which cannot be disclosed to students and parents, will be moderated nationally to ensure fairness. Many teachers have already guided some students towards consolidation work. Students wishing to take the option of demonstrating further progress should seek advice from their teachers at the start of the summer term.
6. In light of the move away from the exam preparation, the focus of departmental and teacher planning will be high quality educational and enrichment programmes that have clear benefit for the next phases of the students' education and lives. The work to generate this programme is exciting and has already begun and tutors have taken soundings from their students to help inform this. As well as the continued consolidation of learning mentioned above, a key focus for 5th Years will be preparation for tertiary study (A Levels or equivalents) with a particular emphasis on the skills required to make the leap. For the Upper Sixth, there will be a provision that supports the transition out of school and into a wider world including University and/or employment. These are significant leaps and ones that schools are not normally afforded much time to support students with. For both 5th Years and Upper Sixth, the current situation actually affords us opportunities to better prepare your children for the next stages of their education and development. Notwithstanding the challenges we are facing, this is an exciting opportunity and one that we expect and encourage the students to engage with fully. It will occupy them intellectually and academically, support them pastorally and mentally and improve the transition into the next phase of their lives. We have been struck by the positive feedback on how important the remote learning has been in terms of remaining socially connected and supported by peers and staff alike.

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The teaching staff, departmental leads and heads of year are regularly in contact and still 'meeting'. We have put in place lots of training for the staff as they negotiate this challenging educational environment and we have facilitated the sharing of good practice through our online platforms. Teachers are directing their planning towards the opportunities outlined above including a co-curricular aspect over the remainder of the Easter holidays. Part of our planning agenda and also our commitment to providing the best possible education we can, will be to review the way that we support remote learning. Please do be reassured that more information will be shared with you and your children as term commences outlining the practical details of what remote learning looks like in the summer term. You will appreciate and understand of course that the school is reacting and adapting to the environment as much as the children and families are, and we are committed to taking and giving the time to prepare robustly.

Thank you once again for your engagement and support during these unprecedented times. We are very proud of our Truro School Community and the commitment demonstrated by staff, students and parents and are positive about the educational outcomes that can be achieved this summer and in so much more than just grade terms. As well as the programmes outlined above, our staff will be working hard behind the scenes to organise and prepare our submission of data for your child in time for the May/June deadlines when finalised by Ofqual. We know you will appreciate the work that must go into this process, planning and delivery and give you our reassurance that it now begins in earnest in response to new information we have. It will adapt to any new or more detailed requirements by exam boards or Ofqual over the coming weeks.

Please do share this letter with your children and please do support them to rest, enjoy hobbies or activities for their own sake as we negotiate these challenging times.

Your sincerely,

Dr Shaun Pope
Deputy Head (Academic)