



Friday 7th May, 2021.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we approach the commencement of the assessment window next week, pupils have been working hard with staff to collate their portfolios and cover content that will be assessed. We recognise that it has been incredibly difficult for pupils across the year, having to navigate a disjointed period, especially when the stakes are so high. They've done so in an extremely mature way, right from the outset of the year when exams as we know them were still a real possibility. They approached that first term with such a positive attitude and a determination to make the most the year and to be successful in the summer exams. Of course, the period of lockdown after Christmas and the destabilising news that exams had been cancelled was incredibly challenging; never-the-less, to their credit, they embraced remote learning whilst we waited for clarity as to how grades would be awarded this year.

Once the government plans were announced and the guidance finalised they've had to find it in themselves to change gear once again, to operate at maximum capacity for the final push we're undertaking now. Again, they've approached this with an amazing attitude and commitment. I can't commend them enough.

This afternoon we've issued a range of information. Parents will know from the information evening we conducted last week that we intended to issue you with the portfolio contents list for each subject area. This content list will be the material produced by pupils and the basis for staff to draw conclusions on the grade to be awarded in relation to the grade descriptors provided by the awarding bodies. For some pupils you may feel as though there were mitigating circumstances at the point of undertaking a particular assessment and therefore you can apply for special consideration to be afforded. The special consideration guidance is stringent but if the pupil was experiencing a qualifying set of circumstances during the point of any assessment listed, you can ask us to apply consideration in which case we can undertake a number of actions to account for this.

The booklet issued today indicates each piece to be considered by a subject area and the date at which this was undertaken. We'd ask you to consult the booklet with your child to look at their subjects and identify any circumstances that could qualify for special consideration at the point of undertaking a particular assessment. The covering letter of the booklet explains how to communicate this to us and when this needs to be completed by. The booklet can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3hc9l7j>

I know that there will be speculation relating to when pupils can leave school and whilst we've been waiting to establish if any further clarity will come from the government on this issue, this doesn't appear to be forthcoming. As a result we have decided that as pupils, in the most part, will complete their assessment pieces and associated administration by the 28th of May, that pupils will be able to leave on this date. However, it's important to note, pupils might still be required to access school beyond the half-term holidays if they have pieces or administrative tasks outstanding or unfinished etc. It is essential, and in their interests, that pupils remain available until the 18th of June should we need to invite them into school - not being available could be detrimental to the grade awarding process.



PART OF THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST | NURTURE | CHALLENGE | ACHIEVE
THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST C/O PRIESTLEY COLLEGE, LOUSHERS LN, WARRINGTON WA4 6RD. COMPANY NUMBER 10689247

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Principal: Mr J Carlin BA(Hons) NPQH



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





Following half-term we will maintain contact with pupils. We know it's been an extremely difficult time and after the focus of working hard over the next three weeks to achieve their grades, the subsequent weeks might be a challenge for them. They will therefore be assigned a staff mentor who will meet with them either in person – where they can attend school – or via teams across final half-term of the year; just to check in with them, see if there is any support that they require and ensure they're well prepared with college applications ahead of September. We would also urge parents to contact us if you have any concerns so that, together, we can coordinate support.

We will still be offering places in school for vulnerable pupils and for those who want to attend school, pupils will be provided with a supervised room to access across the day. Finally, we know that Priestley college are preparing bridging units and taster sessions which will be available for pupils to access online. We will provide an area and facilities for pupils to access these in school should they want to and we will issue more information relating to this closer to the end of term.

I'm also aware that pupils will be looking ahead to the prom, which we all hope will be able to go ahead at the end of year. We're mindful that the lifting of restrictions nationally, which would enable us to have this event, is due to take place on the 21st of June inline with the government's roadmap. We're taking the cautious approach that conceivably there could be some delays in these timings, but we're also encouraged that the current situation seems to indicate that we're on track. So we've scheduled the prom for the 16th of July 2021.

I would stress to parents that whilst we remain optimistic that the event will go ahead on this date, there remains an undertone of caution as the pandemic is still ongoing and we know from other countries - such as India currently and to a lesser extent, France - there can be a rise in cases very quickly which might result in the government taking further action or delaying plans for the lifting of restrictions. So I would urge parents to consider this when investing money in outfits and arrangements at this time; we don't want parents to spend considerable sums only for the event to not go ahead.

Thank you for your continued support of the school and our outstanding young people. The end of a disproportionately challenging year is in sight for our pupils. Year 11 is always a considerable challenge, for obvious reasons, but the young people this year have had to endure a greater degree of challenge than previous cohorts. Their resilience and attitude has been exceptional and I wish them all the very best for the final few weeks and their assessments.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Carlin.

Principal.

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