



from Tom Lawson MA (Oxon), Headmaster

12 January 2021

Dear Parents,

Just a brief letter today by way of reassurance that we are in full swing with remote learning and prepared for whatever structures are put in place for exam year groups.

We understand that uncertainty about what will replace the summer series of GCSE and A-level examinations is causing anxiety for Year 11 and 13 pupils. The government appears nearly ready to put out 'for consultation' a plan, which is to say, therefore, some way away from giving us certainty. We are prepared and determined to work with whatever system prevails to ensure our pupils receive fair reward for their hard work and are not disadvantaged in any way.

A note on IGCSEs and Pre-Us: at present the international exam boards have not cancelled IGCSE summer exams nor Pre-Us. For us this applies to Year 11 English, History, Maths, EAL; and for Year 13 Pre-U Theology and Philosophy only. The HMC is trying to establish for UK candidates the right either to sit the exams in schools or have centre-assessed grades. These exams are scheduled from 5 May 2021 at the earliest and we will let you know as soon as there is a clear decision and timetable.

In the meantime, I am encouraging pupils to keep to their normal work routine, try to avoid the anxiety of a build up to exams, and do their best to keep learning the syllabus material at a normal and manageable pace. They should not feel stuck on the blocks of a sprint, endlessly awaiting a starting pistol. Instead, they should be sustaining a sensible jog through the academic work presented to them.

I am proud of the remote learning we have established and running for your children, as well as the co-curricular activities and pastoral support provided. Nevertheless, we understand that days on the computer screen can quickly become samey and tiring. As well as encouraging pupils to take breaks from the screen and have regular exercise, we will continually look to varying and honing our remote provision. Shortly we will survey pupils to get their feedback on what they find most helpful.

Thank you for your support and patience and I hope that when I next write I will have some firm news on at least some of the questions still unanswered about this academic year.

With very best wishes,

Tom Lawson
Headmaster

PS I would like to bring to your attention a small change to our [Summer Term 2021 dates](#). Term will now start on **Monday 12 April for boarders** with school starting for all on the morning of **Tuesday 13 April 2021**.