



6th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Year 10 and 11 January Exams

I write to you with a decision on the exams that students are due to take tomorrow (7th January) and Monday 11th January. These vocational qualifications initially were planned to continue despite the announcement of the national lockdown and the closure of schools. Very late last night the Department for Education made an announcement that these exams could continue but that it was up to individual schools to decide if it was safe to do so.

We have exams for some Year 11 students and the majority of Year 10 students which would mean representatives of nearly 200 families coming onto the school site. A number of our invigilators have said that they are unable to attend school as a result of the instruction to stay at home. I know from conversations with students and parent that there are considerable anxieties around this issue. I spent considerable time yesterday speaking with the Department for Education, the exam boards and my union seeking guidance on this issue. I have consulted with the subject staff and with the CEO of the Richard Huish Trust.

These vocational exams can be taken at later points in the academic year. For Year 11 students there has already been an announcement, with further details today, that the summer exams will not run 'as normal'. This exam board has said that they will support schools who decide not to run these January exams so that no student is disadvantaged. For Year 10 students, we would be able to take this exam in the summer, potentially, or during Year 11.

I have a duty to do all we can to keep our staff, students and families as safe as possible and I do not believe that asking so many students to travel to school during a national lockdown when there is concern about a new variant of the virus is the right thing to do. We are not yet able to test all students in advance of their exams given that we have had two working days to recruit additional staff and begin the training process.

As a result, all vocational exams due to be taken over the next few days will **not happen** and students should remain at home rather than travelling to school. This is for reasons of safety and reducing social contact. I am far from happy about this situation and realise that there will be a mixture of emotions in your household around this. I do hope that by my taking this decision it removes you having to decide if you want to send your child into school at these difficult times. We will of course continue to provide updates as we learn more about this.

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Registered Office: Richard Huish College, South Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 3DZ



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Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddy', with a long, thin vertical stroke extending downwards from the left side of the signature.

Mr J Eddy
Head Teacher