

1 October 2021

## TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parent/Carer

It has been a real pleasure to meet with parents and carers over the last month. The turn out to the information evenings was exceptional and I hope to continue to strengthen the relationship between parents/carers and the academy as we go through the year. Some families have requested copies of the information shared during the presentations and the main information will be added to The JCB Academy website.

Yesterday, Ofqual released their approach to grading exams and assessments in summer 2022. I have summarised the statement below:

*2022 will be a transition year to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students' education has been disrupted. In 2022 Ofqual will aim, therefore, to reflect a midway point between 2021 and 2019. In 2023, Ofqual aim to return to results that are in line with those in pre-pandemic years.*

*In 2022 exam boards will set the grade boundaries based on a profile that reflects a midpoint between 2021 and pre-pandemic grading. GCSE exams and exam boards will give advance information about the focus of the content of exams, designed to provide guidance for revision for students ahead of summer exams, and study aids will be allowed in some exams. The advanced information will be shared with schools by 7 February 2022*

*There will be optional topics and content in GCSE English literature and learners will be given a formulae sheet for GCSE mathematics in summer 2022.*

Further details can be using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022/outcome/decisions-proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022>

Y11 learners and parents/carers have no need to worry about work which may have been missed last year. However, for learners to achieve the highest grades they will need to use the time they have wisely and departments will support by giving learners additional learning to do at home. All work is available on Google Classroom.

Over the last week we have seen a significant rise in Covid-19 cases. Our cases have been highest in Y10 and we have a number of learners waiting for PCR test results today. Thankfully, many cases have been identified before learners arrive at the academy due to the use of the lateral flow tests. This has reduced the spread of infection and I encourage learners to continue testing twice a week to keep learners, families and staff safe.

Covid-19 rates in Staffordshire are now some of the highest in the UK and Staffordshire County Council are increasing the use of PCR testing in schools. To limit further spread of infection, they are sending one of their testing units to the academy on Monday, 11 October 2021 (see attached letter).

If a learner is showing any symptoms of Covid-19 they must get a PCR test as soon as possible from their local testing site. The local authority also strongly recommend that if another member of your household tests positive that all members of the household get a PCR test as a precaution.

We have had unprecedented interest in the academy Open Day this year and having this volume of visitors together in the academy is unfortunately not appropriate at this stage of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, we have had to re-think how we could give visitors all the information they need and enable them to have a good look around the academy without putting learners and staff at increased risk of infection of Covid-19. Consequently, the format of our Open Day is a slimmed down version of our normal event with a presentation and a tour of the building in groups and will be held over two weekends. We did have a fantastic number of learners volunteer to help and we will ask them to support next year when the event can run as normal.

Following the cancellations of so many events and activities last year, we are striving to give our learners the very best experiences this term. The JCB Academy Sixth Form have been on a number of trips and experiences including a university visit, teambuilding at Alton Castle, Alton Towers and paintballing. The whole Y10 cohort went to see Woman in Black at the Regent Theatre this week. The play is part of the GCSE English curriculum and our wonderful English team took the opportunity to bring the curriculum to life. Over 50% of learners are involved in the many extension activities on offer during the week - it is fantastic to see so many learners getting involved and I wish to thank families for their support. We are all looking forward to the extension activity drop down day on Wednesday, 13 October when learners across the academy will be involved in a range of exciting and fun activities.

Our aim is to continually enhance the world class experience provided by the academy and your suggestions and comments are welcomed.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J McGuirk  
Principal