



WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL
HIGHGATE ROAD
LONDON
NW5 1RN

HEADTEACHER: MS IZZY JONES

TEL: 020 7267 9346

FAX: 020 7284 1274

info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

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Dear Parents / Carers,

Your son / daughter is due to take public exams next week. These exams have not been cancelled. As you know, we have made the decision to remain open as an exam centre, because we think it important that young people who have worked hard with their teachers to prepare for these exams, have the opportunity to show what they have done. It is a question of when the students take them – and I would rather they took them at the time their teachers have planned all the learning to be directed towards.

It is particularly important for Year 12 students to attend these exams, as they have not yet had the experience of sitting formal exams, because their GCSE exams were cancelled last year. None of us know what the future holds, but we should assume that your son / daughter will need to sit formal exams in the next two years – and beyond this if they choose to attend University. I would hate for them to have missed out on valuable practice in sitting exams – which is why it is very important that they sit their exams next week.

I would like to stress that this is not your son / daughter's final opportunity to gain a grade in this unit – they will be able to re-sit this unit in the summer, or in Year 13 if they would like to improve their grade. It is not unusual for students to re-sit exams, because they are still learning how best to show their knowledge and understanding in the context of an exam – this is why I think it very important for students who have not sat their GCSEs to sit their exams next week: they really do have nothing to lose, and lots to gain – at the very least, exam practice and at the most, an excellent result!

There will be some students who will be unable to attend their exams in the present context. The exam board has confirmed that special consideration will be considered, if students submit evidence that they are suffering from Covid (or another serious illness which prevents attendance), or that they are shielding a member of their family who is clinically vulnerable. Unless this evidence is provided, students will have to sit the exam at the next available opportunity – which, of course, will be when the teaching has moved onto a different topic and revision may be more tricky!

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

In kindness,

Flora Wilson

Director of Sixth Form

William Ellis School

fwilson@williamellis.camden.sch.uk