



St Andrew the Apostle

Greek Orthodox School

23 Mar. 20

Dear Upper Sixth Students,

It was sad for us to say goodbye so unexpectedly on Friday. The two years have ended with an anti-climax and without a proper celebration as Mr Marrero and I had intended. We still hope that we can get you all back to say goodbye properly later in the summer. In the meantime, take care. You have been a fabulous year group, a credit to the school, full of joy and fun and ambition, and we will miss you.

A level Grades

We have heard from the Department for Education - see the bottom of this email for the full text. We still don't know details of the full process but they will be based on some kind of predicted grades and then standardised so that the overall profile of grades this year is similar to previous years. It seems you will get your A level grades by the end of July, and there will be a chance to take the actual exams (for those who want to improve a grade) as soon as possible next year, possibly autumn. I know that this information will generate all sorts of questions, where I have attempted to answer some of these on the page opposite.

UCAS

UCAS are working on how they are going to adapt systems to the new situation. Their key message is not to make any rushed decisions. Deadlines remain the same, offers will not be withdrawn, and there is no advantage in rushing to make your firm/insurance choices.

Academic Work

You may think there is no point in doing any work, but here are some reasons:

- You may decide to take the A level exams in the autumn, so it is worth finishing the syllabus
- Your A level content may be useful and relevant to your degree, so you need to be as fully on top of it as any year group in the past
- You need to keep your academic brain alive and ticking over these next months six months
- It's interesting! Doing a hard maths problem or thinking about an issue in English or history is interesting and fulfilling
- And finally, what else are you going to do?

But we do not expect you to engage in the same intense process of revision and work as if the A' level exams were still happening. I have asked teachers to make content and support available to you.

Social Distancing

Remember the reason why schools are closed: so that people can isolate themselves and stop the virus spreading, flatten the curve. You need to avoid social situations, remain as distant as you can from other people, follow the [health professionals' advice](#). Every time you mix socially, you risk passing on the virus to someone who may infect someone who is vulnerable.



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A level Grades – the full text from the government

We will ensure GCSE, and A' level students are awarded a grade which fairly reflects the work that they have put in. There will also be an option to sit an exam early in the next academic year for students who wish to. Ofqual will develop and set out a process that will provide a calculated grade to each student which reflects their performance as fairly as possible, and will work with the exam boards to ensure this is consistently applied for all students. The exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead.

To produce this, teachers will take into account a range of evidence and data including performance on mock exams and non-exam assessment – clear guidance on how to do this fairly and robustly this will be provided to schools and colleges. The exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment, and use this information to produce a calculated grade for each student, which will be a best assessment of the work they have put in.

Ofqual and exam boards will be discussing with teachers' representatives before finalising an approach, to ensure that it is as fair as possible. More information will be provided as soon as possible.

The aim is to provide these calculated grades to students before the end of July. In terms of a permanent record, the grades will be indistinguishable from those provided in other years. We will also aim to ensure that the distribution of grades follows a similar pattern to that in other years, so that this year's students do not face a systematic disadvantage as a consequence of these extraordinary circumstances.

Questions you may have:

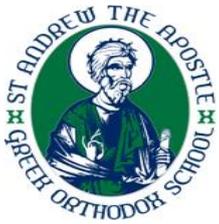
a) I do not think I did as well in my mocks and felt I was on course to do better in the summer. Can I present my case?

We know that some students (but not all) do not perform at their best in mocks, which is one of the reasons for doing them. We await guidance on the detail for producing the calculated grade but we will not simply dump the mock grades into the spreadsheet and send it off. You can see that the DfE do not want us to do the same with predicted grades either. So the in-school data we have and our judgement will have to come in to the mix. We also intend to look at our own historic data; but ultimately the boards will decide the final grades.

I can understand your desire to articulate your case but could I ask you to hold fire right now until we understand the system a little better? There is no indication that they will want these grades submitted imminently, so we have time to make balanced, informed and fair judgements.

b) I have been off school/ill/didn't do my mocks/have special consideration/have extra time. What will happen to me?

We are trying to find out what the processes are for these mitigating factors but please be reassured that we will support anyone who has been in this situation and ensure that they aren't disadvantaged. One of the encouraging aspects of this system is that we are being asked for our judgement, and we know you best.



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c) Once I have got my calculated grade, can I take the exam in only those subjects I'm not happy with?

The DfE have said there will be exams at some point in the future when feasible, and certainly in Summer 2021. If a student is unhappy with their calculated grade and an appeal has not resulted in a change, they can (if they wish) sit the exam to try to improve their grade. There is no indication that this has to be in just subjects they are unhappy with – they could in theory sit all of them for satisfaction if they wanted – at least that is our reading of the guidance.

I will continue to update you as I receive further updates and guidance from the government.

Best wishes,

Mr. M. Vassiliou

(Headteacher – Acting)