6 January 2021

Dear Year 11 Students/Parents/Carers

As you are aware, having yesterday stated that the BTEC examinations in January should continue the DfE have late this evening announced that *"In light of the evolving public health measures, schools and colleges can continue with the vocational and technical exams that are due to take place in January, where they judge it right to do so”.*  **Following this announcement, we have decided not to go ahead with the BTEC examinations.**   It is frustrating that an announcement has been made at such a late stage and we therefore wanted to inform you of our decision as soon as possible.  We appreciate that this will inevitably lead to further worry and confusion for you which is not helpful in the current circumstances.

We realise that our decision may cause disappointment for your daughter who may be well-prepared and will miss the opportunity to demonstrate their learning and skills. However, we feel that, whilst we are confident that we could run the smaller exam on Friday safely, we feel less confident about running the iMedia exam which has much higher numbers.  To run one exam and not the other would be inequitable.

As you will be aware, GCSE examinations are also cancelled and, in cancelling the BTEC examinations, this creates a more ‘level playing field’ for all students.  Many students have been asked to self-isolate through the term and have missed essential course coverage and teacher input which already puts them at a disadvantage. Travel and Tourism students have missed their mock exam this week which will have affected them significantly compared with previous cohorts. There was also significant disruption to learning last year which impacted significantly on learners on these courses.

As with all decisions, we make them in the best interests of the students.  We feel that your daughter will not be disadvantaged in any way.  Unlike other vocational courses, that require certification (such as plumbing/ electricians), where students would need the option to complete the examination, the courses that our students are taking do not have this required element. Students will be awarded a final qualification based on their coursework assessments and will be able to progress to higher level courses at college.

We hope that you are able to support our decision and understand the reasoning behind it. Please do not hesitate to us if you have any concerns.

Kind regards.

Mrs BrickettExaminations and Assessment Manager