

6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear parents/carers

I am sorry that early this morning I had to make the weighty decision to cancel the vocational examinations at Uxbridge High School that were due to take place in the January series.

This decision is despite my confirmation in yesterday's letter to parents that they would be running, as required by the DfE. I know that you will understand that this is not the way that we usually do things at Uxbridge High School. You may have also picked up that I have been forced into making this decision following a U-turn by the DfE last night, literally hours before the first examinations were due to take place this morning.

The various announcements rather weakly have not provided a clear decision to cancel or run the exams but rather to ask schools to make the decision on their behalf. You may agree that it is a totally unacceptable move that has caused undue stress and is definitely not in the best interests of our committed and hardworking students.

Placed in this position, I have made the decision to cancel, in what I believe is in the best interest of our students. I believe it will present less risk in the current COVID climate and provide better equality of opportunity.

My thoughts are for the students who have been placed in this intolerable position. Your son/daughter may have justifiably been made anxious and confused by these events. I would like to offer them my full support and confirm unequivocally that their teachers are in full recognition of the position. They will continue to support them every step of the way towards completion of courses. I would particularly like to recognise the students that arrived in school this morning for exams only to be turned away. I spoke to them all personally and was heartened to hear their mature and balanced response to the news. I am sure this will be echoed in your home.

Moving forward, we have been assured by the examination boards that students will not be disadvantaged by this decision. In fact, it is with some relief that cancelling will place students' vocational outcomes on a level playing field with A-level outcomes that we expect will be determined by some form of teacher assessment. It is my pledge that the staff at Uxbridge High School will ensure that the students' hard work and dedication will be fully recognised at the end of their academic courses in whichever way we are now advised to do this.

To this end, students should continue to work hard with their minds focussed on achieving to the best of their ability in all that they do. I will update you as soon as we are clear about next steps for assessment. We believe that the Secretary of State for Education is speaking today and will invite Ofqual once again to determine on this matter as they did last year.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us at the school.

Yours faithfully



**N B Clemens**  
**Principal**

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