



4 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

I am writing to you from my home, as the second week of 'lockdown' draws to a close. Tomorrow marks the beginning of Holy Week, leading us towards the darkness of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, condemnation and crucifixion. During this time of global crisis, we would be forgiven for thinking that ours is a 'Good Friday world'. That is, a world full of fear, suffering, hurt and grief. However, as Christians, we are 'Easter people' who put our hope in the risen Christ. The story did not stop on Friday... The hope of this Easter season is all about Sunday!

I pray that you and your family have found hope in these otherwise uncertain times. Our school priest, Fr Gareth, will be leading us in worship each day during Holy Week. These short broadcasts begin at 10am on Monday 6 April 2020 and continue daily until Easter Sunday. To take part, simply visit our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/stteilohighschool>.

Free School Meals

The City of Cardiff Council has released the following statement in respect of Free School Meals: *"The collection of packed lunch grab bags will stop from 3 April 2020. The Welsh Government has asked Local Authorities to continue to support children eligible for Free School Meals over the Easter break. Over the next few days, if you have a child eligible for a Free School Meal, you will receive a letter detailing how you may redeem a voucher to the value of £40 as a contribution towards your food needs over the two week Easter period."*

If your child is eligible for Free School Meals, you should shortly receive a letter from the council containing the instructions to download a voucher worth £40 to spend in a supermarket selected by you. Please read these instructions carefully to ensure that your download is successful. If you require any assistance, please visit our advice surgery at the school on Wednesday between 10am and 12pm and a member of staff will be happy to help.

I know that the current lockdown is putting a great deal of strain on families. Please reach out to us if you require any support. If your circumstances have changed, you may be eligible to claim Free School Meals for your child. You can do this if you are entitled to one of the following:

- Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based);
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related);
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit);

www.stteilos.com

- Child Tax Credit with annual income of less than £16,190; or
- Universal Credit with net household earnings of less than £7400.

To enquire or apply, please email freeschoolmeals@cardiff.gov.uk.

Support for families

During these uncertain times, I want families to be reassured that the school will remain a constant source of support. If you are experiencing difficulties and require advice, please telephone our emergency helpline on [07568357563](tel:07568357563). If you (or somebody you know) would benefit from the support of one of our community partners, please visit our emergency website <http://covid19help.org.uk/> and register your details. If you are experiencing food poverty, please visit us at the school on Wednesday between 10am and 12pm to collect a Foodbank voucher. For all other enquiries, please contact headteacher@stteilos.com and I will get back to you.

School staff will continue to make telephone contact with families at least weekly. Please do let us know how you are and if we can assist you in any way.

Award of examination grades

On 3 April 2020, Qualifications Wales released a statement in respect of the award of examination grades (<https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/news/qualifications-wales-issues-guidance-to-teachers/>). It explains that, for every GCSE, AS and A Level qualification, schools will be required to submit a grade for each learner. This grade should be the professional judgement of the subject teacher, supported by the Head of Subject and Senior Leadership Team, about the grade that each learner is most likely to have achieved if they sat their examinations this summer. Schools are also being asked to rank order learners within each grade, for each qualification.

You will find answers to some 'frequently asked questions' below.

Please be reassured that I will be working closely with teachers to consider each child's performance over the entire course of their study in order to provide a fair and realistic judgement of performance.

Learning from home

Most children have been regularly logging into Hwb, downloading resources and undertaking a few hours of study each day. I appreciate that, after two weeks of home learning, motivation may be dwindling! I also know that it can be difficult for parents and carers to get children into good routines when the school is closed. Therefore, after Easter, we will be launching the second phase of home learning.

Our 'phase 2' curriculum is designed to provide increased autonomy and give your child the freedom to design their study around your own particular context and lifestyle. We will be providing hundreds of suggestions for online learning and support to design your own timetables. There will also be a focus on maintaining good health and wellbeing, including opportunities for fitness and fun.

As we move towards the summer, teachers will be working on the 'phase 3' curriculum, which will be a 'forward look' to the next academic year.

I shall keep you updated as we launch each of these new phases and also let you know about other, national, learning opportunities.

A final thought...

Spring is most certainly now upon us. I hope that you are able to find time as a family to enjoy the sunshine, in your garden, on your balcony or during your daily exercise. Look for the hope of Easter in the blossoming of nature around you. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime."

Alleluia, Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Mr I Loynd
Headteacher

Frequently Asked Questions

How will my GCSE, AS or A Level grade be awarded?

Your teachers will make a professional judgement about the grade that you are most likely to have achieved if you had sat your exams this summer. This decision will be based on all of your work throughout the entire programme of study. We will not rely on one-off assessments, such as mock exams. Teachers will use their experience of how learners make progress, especially in the build up to exams, to make fair and realistic judgements.

Can my teacher tell me my grade?

No. Schools have been instructed to keep grades confidential. This is because there will be a national moderation process giving the examination board the final say over the grades you are awarded.

When will I find out my grade?

Grades will be shared no later than the normal results days in August (and possibly before).

Do I need to complete more work to boost my grade?

No. Qualifications Wales has advised that work completed after 20 March 2020, when schools closed, should not be considered in making judgements about grades.

What about vocational qualifications?

We are still waiting for clarification on how grades will be awarded for vocational qualifications.

What is standardisation?

Standardisation is a statistically based moderation process conducted by the WJEC and Qualifications Wales. This is intended to ensure that the overall distribution of grades nationally is broadly in line with what would be expected. The process is designed to keep things as fair as possible.

What about Year 10?

Year 10 learners who were due to sit exams that would have led to a whole GCSE qualification this summer will be issued a grade following the same process as Year 11 learners.

Year 10 learners who were due to sit units that will lead to GCSE results next summer, will not receive a unit result. For those learners, there will be two options: They can choose to sit only the units they plan to take in summer 2021, with their overall GCSE grade calculated on the basis of that performance only. Alternatively, they can choose to sit the Year 10 units in summer 2021, along with Year 11 units.

Whichever option a learner chooses, they will be awarded the best grade from either route.

What about Year 12?

Learners who were due to sit their AS exams this year will not be required to take those exams at a later date. Instead they will be treated in a similar way to those taking GCSEs and A levels.

All AS learners will receive an estimated AS grade and there will be no AS exams until summer 2021. The estimate will be based on a range of evidence, including teacher assessment grades, and **will not** contribute to A level results in 2021.

In summer 2021, AS learners will have two options for their A level award: They can either choose to only sit the A2 units, with the A level grade awarded solely on their performance in those units, or they can choose to sit AS and A2 units. If they choose to sit the AS units alongside the A2 units they will be awarded the best grade from either route – either the grade awarded from performance on the A2 units alone or the grade awarded from combining both AS and A2 units.

What about Year 9?

The school will not be awarding National Curriculum Levels for Year 9 this year.

How will this process affect different pupil groups?

The process of allocating grades to students has some difficult ethical issues associated with it. This is because we know there are differences in performance between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers, for example. For this reason, teachers will work carefully to award grades based on what learners would most plausibly have achieved if they were taking the exam. The Headteacher will then check that each pupil group is achieving in line with expectations and that no one group is disadvantaged.

Should I worry?

Absolutely not! The Headteacher will make sure that everyone receives the grades they fairly deserve.