



Abingdon Learning Trust, Hendred Way, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 2AW  
Telephone: 01235 200239. Email: [enquiries@abingdonlearningtrust.org](mailto:enquiries@abingdonlearningtrust.org)

25<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Cancellation of Exams and Assessments**

As many of you may be aware, on the 12<sup>th</sup> June the final predictions and rankings for all examination entries at John Mason and Fitzharrys Schools were submitted, alongside those of every centre in the country. This was the final step in a 3 month long, rigorous process which saw teachers being asked to do something that they have never been asked to do before; taking a step further, in addition to being their students' guide, mentor and advocate. I am sure there has been much worry and anxiety over the lack of examinations this year for you and your family and no words from us will take away the mixed emotions you will have felt at your child not being able to prove to the world what they are capable of.

However, we feel that it is important that we reassure you of the meticulous, step by step processes that were put in place behind the scenes at our schools, to ensure that the judgements sent to examination boards were a true reflection of your son's or daughter's ability.

1. **Classroom Teachers:** Teachers reflected on all of the work each student had completed over the two year course, up until the point in which the school closed to most students. They looked at all previous data they held for each student, including mark books, mock examination grades, assessment grades and previous predictions. They also took into consideration the special arrangements (such as reader pens, extra time, scribes etc) or special considerations students were entitled to. They then entered a grade for each student they teach, essentially stating what they would have expected the student to achieve.
2. **Heads of Faculty:** Heads of Faculty collated this information and used these predictions and previous whole school data to start the ranking process, lining up each student within each grade in order of most secure, to least. When the initial ranking was complete, Heads of Faculty then met with the subject teachers to discuss each student and refine the rankings making sure all students were in the correct place in the ranking order.
3. **Senior Leadership:** Each Head of Faculty met with their Senior Leadership Link to discuss the grades and the rankings to ensure everyone was confident these were an accurate reflection of each student's ability.
4. **Data Analysis:** The predictions were then run through our own statistical analysis as well as FFT (a national data analysis provider we subscribe to) to identify any potential anomalies in the data, so that the Senior Leadership Team could be certain that the judgements we were making were in line with what an outside observer might expect.
5. **Head of School:** The final check was completed by Adrian Rees (Head of School) and Kirsty Rogers (Deputy Headteacher) at John Mason School or Will Speke (Head of School) and William Browne (Assistant Headteacher) at Fitzharrys.



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- Governors:** The process and systems were then scrutinized by the local governing bodies of both schools, to ensure parity, fairness and rigour. Abingdon Learning Trust Educational Standards Board Trustees then offered the final layer of scrutiny and analysis to ensure the processes in place were in line with all guidance and regulation, as well as in keeping with the moral purpose of our vision and values.

There have been stories in the media recently about the potential for bias or inconsistencies within the judgements that teachers have been asked to make this summer. However, we hope that by making you aware of the exacting structure of our process that you will be able to feel as confident as we do that we have managed to ensure that every student was treated fairly and that we have done everything in our power to ensure our students gain the grades they deserve this summer. You will be aware that the remainder of the standardisation process will be out of our hands, and will be the responsibility of the examination boards and Ofqual to make the final decision on each individual grade; but the Academy Board is very pleased to be able to share with you our rigorous approach.

We look forward very much, as I am sure you do too, to celebrating the success of all of our students in August.

Yours Faithfully

Sarah Brinkley  
Executive Headteacher

Ian Middleton  
Chair of Abingdon Learning Trust Educational  
Standards Committee