

# WOODHOUSE GROVE SCHOOL

[woodhousegrove.co.uk](http://woodhousegrove.co.uk)

28 August 2020

Dear Parents

I do trust that this letter finds you all well as we prepare for the long awaited and much anticipated School re-opening.

### ***School – but not as we know it***

These are extraordinary times and I do hope that you have managed to digest the large volume of information that was sent out last week regarding the School's plans for re-opening. As recorded in our most recent communication, we are delighted to be opening our doors to all students on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September to commence the Autumn Term.

As outlined in the various re-opening handbooks, we will be providing a full curriculum. Hopefully, the information provided thus far has provided answers to your questions; however, if you need any further guidance or clarification over any aspect of our provision, please do not hesitate to email the School at: [welcomeback@woodhousegrove.co.uk](mailto:welcomeback@woodhousegrove.co.uk)

### ***Public Exam Results***

The main news of the summer holidays was, of course, the public examination results. There are many words I could use to describe this summer's exam results season; however, "shambolic" perhaps best sums up the handling of the awarding of exam grades. Since the end of March, the two major teacher associations to which I am affiliated – the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) – had been alerting the exams regulator, Ofqual, to potential problems with the now infamous algorithm. Sadly, neither Ofqual nor the Department for Education listened or took any of these concerns seriously.

In the absence of examinations, we did our very best to be responsible and evidence-led with our Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) and rank orders. At the same time, there were legitimate concerns about the potential for grade inflation and the absence of standardisation in the calculation and award of the grades which meant that a mix of CAGs, rank orders and statistical moderation was necessary.

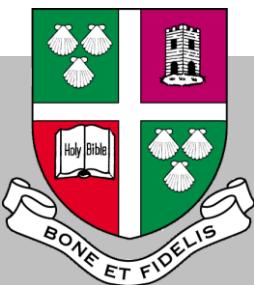
Key to fair outcomes was the correct mix of these ingredients, and as time went on, it became clear that the lack of emphasis on individual student data was likely to lead to unfair outcomes for pupils. My HMC colleagues and I consistently pressed for a transparent, fair and free appeals process to be able to address any issues emerging from Ofqual's calculated grades. The absence of any such process, and the grotesque nature and extent of the A-level results debacle on Thursday 13 August, prompted the call for a reversion to CAGs.

Apperley Bridge, West Yorkshire, BD10 0NR  
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*I am Grovian.*



Woodhouse Grove School is part of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust.  
Registered Office: Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London, NW15JR.  
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This call was made in full knowledge that CAGs were not perfect and that a whole host of new difficulties would follow, including pressure on university places and a likelihood that some parents would challenge the CAGs awarded in good faith by the School. However, in my view, this was by far the lesser of two evils. It enabled us all to move on; students to progress to the next stage of their educational journey and schools to concentrate on their preparations for a start of an Autumn Term like no other. Plus, it avoided the possibility of an even bigger crisis that would erupt with the publication of GCSE results on 20 August.

We are, of course, rightly proud of our A-level and GCSE results and the achievements of our young people. As ever, in any exam season there are winners and losers, but usually on the back of the students' own efforts, not by the whim of a system which was designed to safeguard the big picture and in the end has safeguarded no one – this generation of students, schools, colleges, universities, and even perhaps year groups to come.

It is difficult to talk about record results when the planned moderation process was then removed. That said, we had very high hopes for both our Year 11 and Year 13 students; they were proven capable on every measure we had, and it is a travesty that there remain question marks over some of the grading. However, at an individual level, the results remain worthy of significant celebration. We have 50 Year 13 students who achieved ABB or better in their A-levels; 63 students at GCSE with at least one top grade (8 or 9) and 36 pupils with at least 6 high grades (7 or better), while 92% of the cohort have achieved the headline statistic of 5 GCSE passes including English and mathematics.

## **Staffing News**

New teaching staff appointments were recorded in my End of Term letter; however, for the benefit of parents new to the School, please see below the list of new appointments, both internal and external, for September 2020:

### **External Appointments:**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| • Mrs Crawford | Resident House Tutor (Miller House)             |
| • Miss Emmott  | Teacher of Art                                  |
| • Mr Exeter    | Teacher of Science                              |
| • Mr Gill      | Teacher of Computing and Information Technology |
| • Mrs Innes    | Teacher of Economics and Business Studies       |
| • Mr Price     | Teacher of Science                              |

### **Internal Appointments, include:**

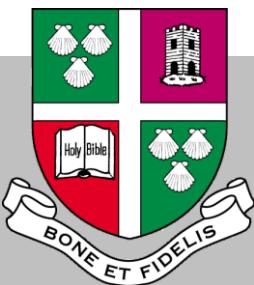
- |                |                              |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| • Mr Davis     | Director of Academic Systems |
| • Mrs Jennings | Head of Year 8               |
| • Mr Whitlam   | Head of Year (Sixth Form)    |

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## ***Behaviour Expectations***

I am sure you will all appreciate the huge amount of work that has gone into preparing the School for the start of a new term. In this new world of socially separated ‘bubbles’, we will be doing our level best to make the return to school a positive experience for all those involved. However, in order to realise this ambition, we do need the full buy-in and co-operation of the whole student body. I must, therefore, respectfully draw your attention to the section of the Re-opening Handbook [page 11] on ***Behaviour Expectations***. We expect all students to act responsibly and follow Government and School guidelines at all times in order to promote and safeguard the health and wellbeing of the whole community. Students who choose to flagrantly ignore the rules or fail to comply with the School’s system of control measures should expect to be sent home.

## ***Quarantine Guidance***

Please can I remind families that any students who have recently travelled to any of the countries not on the Government’s ‘travel corridor’ list, will have to self-isolate for 14 days before returning to school.

## ***Face Coverings***

On Wednesday of this week, the Department for Education (DfE) changed its guidance and now advises that in areas under local restrictions, face coverings should be worn in schools when moving around corridors and communal areas. Parents should note that whilst the School has a Bradford postcode, Leeds City Council is our local authority. This being the case, until such guidance changes, our current policy on face coverings still stands. Please click on the following link for more details: [Face Coverings](#).

In closing, my colleagues and I are extremely excited to be welcoming back all our children next week. I suspect that they are excited and slightly daunted by the prospect of returning to school after such a long layoff. However, I am confident that, once new routines have been established, the term will run smoothly and efficiently, and that they will make the very most of this very special learning environment.

With all my best wishes,

Yours sincerely

James Lockwood MA  
Headmaster

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