



## Message from Kevin McKellar

Dear Parent/Carer,

You will all be aware of the changes to the GCSE examination system. I will be writing to Michael Gove to make him aware of our concerns. Ultimately, we feel that it is inappropriate to be informed of a substantial change to the way our performance will be measured through a leaked document in a newspaper and ahead of the publication of the outcome of the DfE consultation on accountability.

It also seems that there has been misunderstanding around the issue of early entry. An important point to note, is that many high performing schools use early entry, not as a means of 'gaining' the system, but in order to carefully personalise provision for different students. For example, early entry is frequently used with lower attaining and vulnerable students to boost confidence and build resilience. Rather than putting a ceiling on their achievement, this experience often enables students to go on and achieve a higher grade still when retaking their exam in a later examination session by the end of Key Stage 4. Offering lower ability, vulnerable and middle attaining students more than one opportunity to pass an examination is not about 'cheating' but about genuinely seeking to maximise life chances - enabling as many students as possible to achieve the standard which will open doors to further education and employment opportunities.

The timing of this announcement presents students and schools with some significant difficulties. Our students have been working towards sitting their examinations in November for over a year. With weeks to go before the next examination session we have been faced with making a decision very rapidly and then communicating that to students and their parents.

It really does not seem acceptable to make significant changes to courses that students are already part way through; it creates substantial anxiety amongst students and parents and jeopardises chances of success. For this reason, Hendon School has been placed in an extremely difficult position - in effect, being asked to choose between what we know to be the best for our students and what will be the best for our school. The dilemma is that we want to ensure that the interests of the pupils are identical to the interests of the school.

Our school has come such a long way over the last 7 years. I have therefore taken the decision not to enter the students for the November examination because I do not want Michael Gove, or any government minister, to think that we fear any of the changes put upon us. Our students are resilient. Our teachers are extremely conscientious and extremely talented and we can rise to any challenge that Mr Gove sets us.

However, we all have a voice. We can contact our local MP. We can also write to Mr Gove and his team. I have never known so much change happen within such a short space of time. We are all in this together and I sincerely hope that you respect my decision not to enter our students for the November examination. On a more positive note, our current Year 11 students are working to the very best of their ability. We are absolutely thrilled with the progress that they are making and I fundamentally believe that they can compete with the best in Barnet. Please do not hesitate to get back to me if you would like any more information about this.

Kind regards,

Kevin McKellar

**Please note that non uniform day scheduled for Wednesday 16th October will now take place on Monday 21st October.**

Monday 14 October - Friday 18 October		
Monday 14 October	Year 13 Geography Conference Cricket Coaching (Sports Hall) Year 9 Football vs St Marys (Home)	All day 3.30 - 5.30 pm
Tuesday 15 October	Year 10 Football vs St Marys (Home) Year 10 Netball Tournament	2.15 pm onwards
Wednesday 16 October	Year 11 Football vs Hasmondian (Cup) Middlesex Deaf Cricket Championships	
Thursday 17 October	School partially closed (for years 7,8,9,10 & 12) due to industrial action. Year 11 & 13 should attend school as normal.	
Friday 18 October	Early Closure - Students dismissed at 12.10 pm	



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