28th April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers of Year 11

**Time draws to a close…**We all know that this has been a strange time for Y11 and for parents and teachers as we made sense of the ever changing information on what GCSE awarding might look like. I also know that Year 11 have been asking for some clarity on what the end of their time at St Joseph’s might look like. Whilst the details of our plan are not yet fully fleshed out, this letter is intended to paint a picture of what to expect.

**TAGs:** We are now in the main teacher assessment period where students will continue their learning and also have a series of exam style tests to develop hard evidence that captures the grade they are working at. Teachers have been assessing your child throughout the course but the following four weeks are about gathering evidence to support and validate grade judgements. The process of standardisation of judgements and moderation with experienced examiners and staff from other schools will continue, meaning that no one teacher will have the sole judgement about a child’s grade.

**What next?** During the final week of the half term (WB 24th May) we plan to arrange to bring the year group together in a Covid safe way to remember, celebrate and appropriately mark the time when Year 11 students start to make the transition from St Joseph’s to their chosen post 16 provision. You will notice that we are careful not to advertise this as their leaving date. The reason for this is that Year 11 will remain on our school roll and we will continue to provide an enrichment calendar for them until 30th June. It is important that students continue to monitor their epraise during this time as this is how we will communicate with them.

After half term our formal timetable will cease but some students will be called in to provide further evidence in certain subjects, for example where controlled assessments are close to being finished. This work could still make the difference between one grade and the next. From Tuesday 1st June we will start to provide a calendar of events for our young people focusing their minds for a period of discernment. We will signpost face to face visits to post 16 providers, opportunities to explore careers and join virtual visits to universities. We have bought in an opportunity for students to learn how to create a CV that puts them ahead of the rest and there will be an opportunity to do virtual work experience in a range of different careers. We hope that students will engage in these opportunities and use this time to prepare amazing futures.

**The best non-prom ever!** As you know, due to Covid it was too risky to plan a full prom with all the usual non-refundable expensive trimmings. The thought of a student forking out for an expensive ticket and outfit only to find that they couldn’t attend or the event couldn’t go ahead was fraught with too many potential disappointments. We all know that the achievements of the last 5 years, the shared experiences, the joys and pains and the common memories need to be shared and commemorated. After listening to the young people we are planning to hold an event in School on the evening of 1st July. We envisage a nice opportunity to get people together for one last time. We plan to use the Sports Hall and the wider school grounds if the weather permits, so that we can make it as Covid safe as possible. It might be that we bring in a DJ, Candy Stalls, Ice cream vans, BBQs etc but we want the young people to know that this is *their* celebration, so we are keen to be guided by them in the planning of the event. Likewise, students can wear what they feel comfortable in, but we are encouraging students not to spend a fortune buying excessive outfits. The focus is on celebrating the *people*, not what they are *wearing* or the *car* they arrive in! We are thinking more *car park drop offs* rather than the *Oscars*! I know that this is ‘different’ but one thing for sure is that it will go down as a memorable occasion. Let’s make sure it’s for the right reasons and the class of 2021 are the class remembered for not just surviving challenging circumstances but making the best ever memories and achievements in the history of our school. Who knows? If they do it well, future year groups may model their celebrations on theirs!

I know that our Y11 are certainly capable of doing just that. From the bottom of our hearts we thank them for the admirable way they have conducted themselves particularly in the last 12 months. They have been wonderful role models for the rest of the school and genuinely a pleasure to be with.

**GCSE Results Day:** We will invite students and their families back into school on Thursday 12th August. It is likely that this will be an open air event and we will ask students to pick up results from under the canopies. More information about this will follow closer to the time

For now though, thankyou for all your support in such a challenging time. We ask that you encourage your child to keep on working as hard as they can to get the best grades they are capable of and then we can all look forward to celebrating all that they are when the time comes.

Take care and God Bless!

Mr T McCabe

Headteacher