

Cardinal Pole Catholic School

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24th October 2013

Dear Parents/Carers, **GCSE Early Entry Statement**

As you know, for some years we have given students the opportunity to take their GCSE in these subjects in November of year 11 after a full and intensive preparation programme. This has enabled the school to prepare students for exams at different times of the year, reducing the pressure of sitting all the exams in the summer. When necessary, there has been a second opportunity to take the examination in June of year 11, with the aim of achieving a higher grade following some further intensive teaching and practice, and with the benefit of having practised the examination once already.

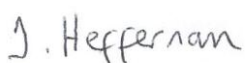
Recently, with no warning, and with immediate effect, the government announced that only the first attempt at a GCSE would count in the grades publicly reported for the school, and for the purposes of Ofsted. The government has taken this step because it believes that giving a young person more than one chance to pass an important examination is wrong, and that they should be given one opportunity only.

At recent meetings with year 11 parents it was explained that given the importance of GCSE results not only to students taking them but to the school, we feel we have no alternative but to withdraw most students from the November GCSE sitting. This is because we cannot now take the risk that some students may not achieve their full potential at the first attempt, because those first attempts will now be the only grades the government and Ofsted will count. We will, instead, give students a full practice examination from a previous set of papers from 18th-29th November but it will not unfortunately be a 'live' examination and will not enable them to achieve an official GCSE grade. We have taken this decision with great regret, because we believe we had a good system in place which gave students the best possible chances of success.

Please rest assured that, we will continue to do everything we can to help your child secure the best possible grades in all his or her GCSEs.

The next Year 11 Parent's evening will take place on December 12th from 4.30-7.30pm. This will be an opportunity for you to discuss the practice examination results. Thank you once again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Ms J Heffernan
Headteacher

