



7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear parents and carers,

**RE: Vocational Exams for PE Voc, Media Voc and ICT**

As you will be aware, there are a number of external exams scheduled to happen the week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 notifications. As of the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 the Government directed that the school could choose if the exams go ahead.

We in LBBD have significant considerations:

- We are in a full national lockdown
- Barking & Dagenham have one of the highest levels of Covid in the Country
- A high proportion of our families are BAME who have shown nationally are at greater risk from Covid.
- The new variant is 70% more transmissible
- Local hospitals and NHS services are at capacity
- There is heightened anxiety around coming into school from students due to Covid.
- Being anxious re: contracting Covid whilst sitting an external exam may have a negative effect on exam outcome
- Doing an exam having been mass tested prior to doing the exam may increase anxiety
- Doing an exam whilst wearing a mask are not the exam conditions that we want for our children.

In conclusion, I am cancelling the vocational exams at Sydney Russell for two reasons:

- Health & Safety
- Concerns regards to pupils' mental health and wellbeing

I am sure you appreciate this has not been an easy decision, but I am sure you appreciate my concerns regarding your child's welfare.

Given that the exams that your son/daughter was due to take were modular, not taking the exam this January should not have a negative effect on their exam results. Please be reassured I will update you further when I have clarity regarding the alternative arrangements for our students and their external outcomes this summer.

Yours sincerely

Janis Davies

Principal