



# Lancaster Girls' Grammar School

**Headteacher** Mrs Jackie Cahalin BA NPQH **Deputy Headteachers** Miss Sarah Bellin BEd, Mrs Gill Jackson BA NPQH

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Dear Parent

## **Year 10 Change to Science GCSE Examination Board**

You will be aware that we had hoped to teach the new AQA Certificates in Physics and Chemistry instead of the traditional GCSE. We felt that the content and style of this course would suit our pupils well and, indeed, that has been the case.

We were assured that the remaining obstacles which had prevented schools in England from offering this type of course in the past would be removed. However, we have just been informed by AQA (the examination board) that OFQUAL (the examinations regulator for England and Wales) is not going to recognise this course for performance measures in the immediate future although they have recognised it as equivalent to GCSE for the purposes of funding. This makes it likely that fewer schools will enter candidates for this course and we are concerned that, although we know it to be an excellent qualification, those outside the school system might not understand this. Because of these uncertainties we have decided to change to alternative courses.

In Chemistry we will move to Edexcel's equivalent – the Edexcel Certificate in Chemistry. This is a very similar type of course and pupils will not notice any difference. As Edexcel have offered this course for a number of years, OFQUAL have recognised it for performance measures.

In Physics we will move back to the AQA Physics GCSE course. This is from the same family of qualifications as the Biology GCSE that your daughter is currently following. The topics we have covered so far in Physics are almost identical in both specifications and therefore you do not need to worry that any time has been lost or wasted. There are two major differences. Firstly, the GCSE does include Controlled Assessments. We will carry these out later in the course as we would have done had we been following this specification from the outset. The second difference is the facility to sit modules during the course. Although all the units can be taken at the end of Year 11, most schools will take advantage of spreading out the examinations. It is therefore our intention to enter pupils for unit 1 in the Summer of Year 10. We will have covered all the topics required in good time.

We hope this explains why we have had to make changes and the nature of those changes. If you have any questions or would like to discuss anything further then please do not hesitate to contact us at the school.

Yours sincerely

*Mr Keith Strachan*

Assistant Headteacher & Head of Science

*Mrs Jackie Cahalin*

Headteacher