



2 March 2021

Dear Year 11 pupil (copied to parents),

I hope that you are well and looking forward to returning to school. I know that your teachers are very much looking forward to seeing you in person and returning to some sense of normality.

I very much understand the stress that both the disruption to teaching over the last few months and the uncertainty over how grades would be awarded has produced for you. I am so sorry that this situation has occurred and I hope that the return to school and some clarity over grades will help.

The outcome from the public consultation on awarding GCSE and A Level grades this summer has now been published following the Government Press Release which was released yesterday morning:

- Initial press release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/teacher-assessed-grades-for-students>

- Consultation outcome:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964597/6747-1_decisions_-_GQ_consultation_on_awarding_grades_in_2021.pdf

- How qualifications will be awarded:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/how-qualifications-will-be-awarded-in-2021>

We now need to work through these documents and determine how we can best respond in our school context. I have also attached an infographic provided by Ofqual which gives a useful overview.

Although these documents set out the broad principles behind awarding grades, the examination boards are expected to provide detailed guidance to schools before the end of the Spring Term. We are pleased that the grades will be awarded through teachers making "*a holistic judgement of each student's performance based on a range of evidence*". Evidence can include, past assessments from all stages of the courses, work already completed, mock exam grades, future work and future assessments. The school is currently discussing these principles with the different departments. We are looking at how the various sources of evidence may be relevant in each subject and can be used to help us arrive at grades which are a fair reflection of what you have achieved and are fair across the cohort. In particular, we are finalising how best to provide further assessment opportunities to allow you to show what you can do at the end of your courses, which will help you to focus on a successful conclusion to your studies. Given that you have been out of school this term, it is important that you are given ways to demonstrate your ability over the coming weeks, therefore

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attendance to school and engagement in lessons is vitally important. This is included in the guidance which explains that *“the grade should indicate the student’s demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills”*. The guidance also suggests *“They will refine their understanding through continued teaching and assessment”* and so we are thinking very carefully about how we can structure this for you.

Although exams have been cancelled this Summer schools still need to enter pupils for examination courses and submit teacher assessed grades in order for pupils to be awarded qualifications. Teachers’ judgements must be supported with evidence based on the subject content delivered via remote learning or in the classroom before and after the school closure. The submission date for grades is 18th June, which allows considerable opportunities for pupils to demonstrate improvements on their return to school. It is important you keep engaged in your learning and study as long as possible so that your hard work can be considered in your grade. Exam boards will provide a package of support materials and exemplar assessments to support teachers in awarding fair grades, therefore it is up to you to ensure you complete all work set to increase the range of supporting evidence required to secure your grades.

- In advance of any assessment we will provide information about the topics or skill areas to be assessed. We will also provide you with support and time during lessons to help you prepare so that you are in the best possible situation to demonstrate your ability.
- Assessments would be used to inform the teachers’ judgements but would not be the only information used to determine your grade; any assessments would form just one part of the ‘range of evidence’.

The school is absolutely committed to ensuring that you receive the good grades that reflect your hard work and achievements over the years, whilst also taking into account the difficulties you have faced through the pandemic. We are committed to supporting you with the next step on your educational journey.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Hanson
Headteacher

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