

Date: 05.03.2021

Dear Parents / Carers of students in Year 11

I am writing to update you on how the GCSE grades will be determined this summer. Although there are a number of factors that still need careful consideration before finer details can be provided, we are glad to be in a position to share our broad approach. We will, of course, be following the guidance set out by the Department for Education closely and as such, the following key aspects of the process will be in place:

- Grades will be determined by teachers based on a range of evidence from across each course
- Any non-examined assessment (NEA), whether complete or incomplete, will be used to help teachers in determining grades
- In addition to the assessment data that we already have, we will be taking advantage of the opportunity to use questions from the exam boards, largely based on past exam papers, to help support us in producing short, standardised assessments for completion in May this year
- These short, standardised assessments will assess students on clearly-defined sections of their course specifications ie will *not* require students to prepare to be assessed on the entire syllabus for each course
- The deadline of submission of grades to the exam boards is 18 June 2021, but the marking, moderating and additional processing required to ensure that the process is robust, will necessitate a much earlier end to the collection of new evidence (almost certainly by mid-May)
- There will be plans shared in due course about productive use of student time between mid-May and students' formal leaving dates, for example completion of any outstanding content to prepare students for Sixth Form / other post-GCSE pathways.

The decision to use short, standardised assessments (supported by exam board materials) in May has been taken to ensure that students have as much opportunity as possible to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in advance of grades being determined. We know that many students develop significantly over a two-year course and so these assessments will take place as late as possible in the process to accommodate this. This will also mean that students have as much advance notice as possible of the nature of the assessments and the content covered by them. It is very important to understand that these standardised assessments are *not* a replacement for the exams and will only provide additional information to be taken into account, alongside a range of existing evidence.

The assessments will take place in normal lesson time, with the class teacher, and will not attempt to replicate the broad range of content found in exams. The content covered by these assessments will be carefully chosen by departments to ensure that it has been covered by students and we intend to share the details of the content to be covered prior to the assessments taking place. This will give students ample time to prepare for the assessments, and activities in lessons will be structured to support them

in this process. Procedures will be in place to support the usual examination concessions for students for whom these apply.

We anticipate that GCSE subjects will usually have two standardised assessments of an hour each but some subjects may have three standardised assessments of an hour each. However, when the exact details are finalised, it is likely that those subjects with significant non-examination assessment components will require fewer assessments than this.

Although there are further details still to come, we wanted to communicate to you as soon as we had the main features of the grade determination process in place, and hope that this overview is helpful to you for now. We would like to reassure you that a great deal of careful thought is going in to considering the further details, and that these will be with you, and the students, as soon as possible.

We are very much looking forward to having the students back with us in school next week. We are very aware that this will be a challenging time for many of our students and it is our first priority to support them in settling back into school over the coming weeks. We are fully committed to working together with the students to support them through this process and on to their pathway next year.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Nicholson

Secondary Headteacher