

08/02/2021

Dear Year 11 Parents,

GCSE Grades 2021 – Tests and Assessments

As we approach the half-term break, schools across the country continue to wait for guidance from the exams regulator Ofqual about how GCSE grades will be awarded this summer. You may be aware that Ofqual and the DfE recently received almost 100,000 responses to a consultation on how GCSE and A level grades would be awarded this summer. Ofqual have said they will announce the results of the consultation towards the end of this month, in the week beginning Monday 22 February. Very shortly thereafter, we expect to be in a position to tell you exactly how your son's grades will be calculated this year.

At the moment, therefore, it is impossible to give you precise information about how your son's grades will be determined. Based on the proposals in Ofqual's consultation and on our experience of submitting Centre Assessment Grades last year, however, we believe it is likely that tests and assessments carried out under controlled exam conditions will be a significant factor in determining the grades we submit to the exam boards on your son's behalf. This is because the results of these tests, achieved under conditions as close as possible to the conditions in a real public exam, are judged to be one of the most reliable and fairest measures of a student's attainment level.

In January, when schools went into lockdown, we decided not to proceed with the Mock Exams because we were unable to run them under strict controlled conditions. Since then, the government has indicated that schools may start to reopen from Monday 8 March. This will be dependent on the success of the vaccination programme and a continuing decline in the number of coronavirus cases nationwide. The government has not specified which year-groups might return to school first, but if our Year 11 students return to school in early March, it is our intention to run a full series of tests and assessments, under controlled conditions, starting in mid-March and finishing just before the end of term.

The prospect of important assessments in a month's time will undoubtedly shape the work your son does at school over the next few weeks. Revision should also be part of his preparation. On Thursday of this week, we will release a list of the topics and parts of the syllabus in each subject that will be tested in the assessments. We hope this will allow your son to prepare effectively for them. A full timetable of the assessments will be released as soon as the government confirms the date that Year 11 are returning to school.

We appreciate these are challenging and sometimes frustrating times for our students – especially those preparing for GCSEs and A levels. We will continue to do our best to support your sons and ensure they get the grades to move on to the next stage of their lives and education.

Yours sincerely,

James Eve

Assistant Headteacher