



13<sup>TH</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

**Re: Exams**

Now that your child has settled back into school and is relearning daily routines and expectations, which in September seemed a distant memory, I thought I would write to you to set out the school's position on exams and assessments and how the school will work to implement the government's guidance on GCSE and vocational exams in 2021.

**GCSE and Vocational Exams 2021**

As of 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the government have made it clear that they expect exams to *go ahead* in 2021 with only minor adjustments. This decision remains subject to change but we want to do the very best for our students so we are providing you with a complete picture of what we know.

- Exams will take place from 7 June 2021 until 2 July 2021. *This three-week delay has been implemented to give schools more time to complete the GCSE curriculum. At this time, a precise timetable has not been provided by the government or the exam boards. We only have the exam 'window' outlined above.*
- Students will sit exams or complete controlled assessments in every subject they study. *Most exam boards have reduced the content of their exams, in some cases removing papers. Your child's teacher will know which topics (but not the specific questions of course!) will be examined and will advise students to prepare accordingly.*
- Exams will take place in a Covid secure environment. *The health and safety of students is our top priority. We will write to you again shortly before the exams begin with details of how we will safeguard your child's health and safety.*
- A single GCSE Maths paper and a single GCSE English paper will be sat by students at some point in May 2021 and definitely before 7 June 2021. *We do not have a confirmed date for these exams. Should any student have to self-isolate between 7 June 2021 and 2 July 2021 these papers will be used to calculate grades in these crucial subjects.*
- GCSE results will be issued on Friday 27 August 2021. *This is a day later than originally planned. All students nationwide will receive their results on this day. We will aim to provide results in person. This decision will be subject to change according to government advice and guidance.*

The information above represents all the formal information we have at this stage about GCSE and vocational exams in 2021. As soon as we are in a position to give you and your children more information we will do so.

/Contd

## Mock GCSE and Vocational Exams 2021

In order to fully prepare your children for the rigours and challenges of the GCSEs in the summer of 2021 we have planned a fortnight of mock exams beginning on Monday 22 February 2021 and running until Friday 5 March inclusive. A detailed timetable will be sent home in January.

In a normal year mock exams form a crucial part of preparation for GCSE examinations. In 2021 they will be even more crucial and should be approached with the same degree of seriousness and effort as the real thing. In 2020 mock exam grades formed part of the evidence base for the 'centre assessed grades' which students received in place of their exams and although, as of the date of this letter, the government has not released details of a contingency plan should exams not go ahead, it is very likely that mock exam results will form part of such a plan. We will be preparing students rigorously for their mock exams and would urge you to do the same at home. If you would like to know how you can help your child please contact their class teachers who will be happy to help.

### Predicted grades

It is natural for many students to want to know what grade their teacher thinks they can achieve and, with applications for post-16 places looming, you will also wish to know this information so you can advise and guide your child appropriately. We remain committed to providing this information but it must come with a disclaimer. Our predictions do not have the benefit of all the information we would usually have. Students have missed months of regular homework deadlines, they have missed countless in-class assessments and they did not sit end of year exams. While teachers are working exceptionally hard to ensure students are ready for their exams next summer and are already collecting and recording vital information about your child's progress, the 'missing' information does mean that predictions will not be as precise as we'd like. We are explaining to students that while our predictions are informed by evidence, they should be seen as a target to aim for rather than a firm indicator of current and future potential. As more information becomes available these predictions will inevitably change. Some may increase, some may decrease. If this happens students will be fully briefed and supported.

This letter sets out everything we know and are able to tell you about exams and predicted grades. If you have any queries please contact me at school and I will respond. I will continue to update you as and when more information becomes available.

Yours sincerely



**Mr N Martin**  
**Assistant Headteacher**