



Dear Parents and Carers,

13 January 2022

I hope that this letter finds you all well. I am writing to make you aware of some important work that we are doing this term as we are preparing your child for the awarding of their A Level grades at the end of this academic year.

I will start by saying that the government have been very clear with schools that it is their intention that exams will take place this year and they are doing all that they can to ensure this happens. We all recognise that this is the fairest way to award grades to students across the country.

Ofqual have already made some adjustments to the exams in some subjects to ensure that they are fair and take into account the impact that school closures will have had on students across the country. Teachers have already shared these changes with your child so that they are clear exactly what they are preparing for in the Summer.

Exam boards will also be sharing with us some details about the content of the exams so that revision can be more focussed. Schools should have this information by 7th February and we will obviously pass this on to you and our students as soon as we are able to.

However, schools are also being asked to prepare a contingency so that in the event that exams do need to be cancelled we will have a range of evidence to support the awarding of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). Ofqual have given us some guidance about how they want this to happen to avoid some of the inconsistencies that existed last year with the awarding of TAGs.

Where qualifications contain non-exam assessments (NEA's) students should continue to work towards completing these. If exams are cancelled, they will be used to contribute to the awarded grades.

If TAGs are awarded, schools will be asked to produce a portfolio of assessments that cover a range of content, that are completed in exam-like conditions, without the use of notes, and where students have not been told the questions beforehand. They are to complete an assessment in each term of this academic year, which we already planned for them to do, so their mock exams will provide the evidence for TAGs should they be needed. Students are not able to repeat these assessments for the purpose of TAGs, but they may do so in preparation for their exams.

We are sharing this information with you and your child so that they can use this to prepare themselves appropriately for the upcoming mock exams. We are not wanting to add any unnecessary pressure or anxiety to the process for them as we are aware that they will already be feeling anxious about their exam preparations but equally we need them to know how their mocks will be used in the event that the government take the decision in the future to cancel exams.



As the mocks now need to be used to support students' preparation for the final exams and allow them to demonstrate what they know, understand and are able to do should it be required to be used as evidence of their progress, we have taken the decision to move their next set of mocks to the week commencing 28th February. This allows us the opportunity to make use of the guidance from the exam boards in setting the papers and to share the information with students that they will need to target their revision. We have also timetabled a final assessment point in the summer term. This will only be utilised if exams are cancelled.

Mock exams will be marked, and students will receive feedback including a mark for them, but it is really important that I am clear these do not equate to TAG grades. TAG grades will be calculated, in the event that they are needed, using a balance of assessments weighted in line with the exam board guidance and they will consider NEA's as well as mock exams. Ofqual have been very clear that school staff are not able to share any information about the grade a student would be awarded in the event that TAGs are implemented so please do not put staff in a difficult position by asking them to grade your child's work in this way.

We are all hoping that exams go ahead as planned but we also know that the decision for this is out of our control. The DfE have said that they will make a decision based on the national picture, needing to ensure that the process is fair across the country. They have made it clear that this could mean a last-minute decision to cancel exams, so we need to be prepared for every eventuality. We don't want our students to be worrying about this unnecessarily so our focus with them will be on encouraging them to continue to work to the best of their ability. If they continue to do this then we can ensure that however their grades are awarded, they will have the best opportunity for success.

Please do all that you can to reassure and encourage your child so that they continue to approach their studies with maturity, responding positively to feedback from their teachers and making the most of all the opportunities that they are offered in school. We will be meeting the students next week to discuss this with them.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will do our best to answer them.

Yours sincerely,



Miss Jo Love
Headteacher



Mr Andy Riding
Deputy Headteacher