

4 March 2021

Dear Pupils, Parents and Carers

The government has now issued guidance on how GCSE grades will be awarded this year. The full guidance is available for all at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021>

There are some very positive features of this guidance and pupils and parents should be assured that these give us the opportunity to ensure that pupils receive the GCSE grades that they deserve and that they would have achieved had they been sitting the full GCSE exams experienced by pupils in other years.

The key aspects of the guidance are as follows:

- “More **recent evidence** is likely to be more representative of student performance”. This means that assessment needs to take place towards the end of the course. Evidence produced by the November Practice Exams is not recent enough in its own right but can be considered as part of the overall evidence.
- “Teachers can use **a range of evidence** to make a judgement of the grade they are performing at.” This means that we have the ability to select the assessment evidence which best describes what pupils are capable of.
- “Students should only be assessed on **what they have been taught**, ensuring sufficient coverage of the curriculum to **enable progression**.” This means that we can carefully select the topics on which assessments can be based but that we must ensure the evidence used, covers as much of the content of each course as possible.
- “When determining the grade, teachers should reflect the **standard at which the student is performing now**, not their potential”. This means that we must be able to evidence the standard of work produced and not make a prediction about possible future standards.
- “We (The Department for Education) recommend the following range of evidence is used: student work produced in response to **assessment materials provided by the exam board**, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers”. The exam boards have been instructed to produce papers for use by schools in order to make these final judgements.
- “Centres should aim to use **consistent sources of evidence** for a class or cohort that relate closely to the specification requirements”. This means that we should use evidence of assessments that every pupil has completed and which is based on exam board assessment papers.

- “Teachers should take account of the **standard of any coursework** undertaken by students in their overall judgement”. This means that the NEAs and other non-exam assessments should be used as evidence in deciding the final grade for pupils.
- “The exam boards **will provide assessment materials**. These will include sets of questions organised to help teachers quickly find questions in the topics they have taught. These questions will be provided **to assist teachers in making fair and consistent judgements** of the standard of a student’s performance.” This is clear that additional assessments should now take place using these exam board materials.

What this means for our Pupils

The Exam Boards will be asking us as a school to indicate the GCSE grade our pupils should receive based on a portfolio of evidence. Our teachers, who know your child best, will consider the evidence they have of their learning from across the whole GCSE course alongside guidance from Exam Boards to assess GCSE grades.

The evidence used will vary for each subject. This may include practice exam results from Year 10 and 11 as well as in-class assessments. Each subject teacher will tell pupils what assessments are being used.

There will be final assessments in all subjects which will be one of a number of pieces of evidence. **These assessments will take place between 10-21 May**. Pupils will only be assessed on what has been covered confidently in the course and all exam concessions will be honoured during this final assessment period.

Teachers are compiling specific revision materials and will be sharing these with pupils over the next few weeks. Lesson time will also include revision activities and exam practice.

Every lesson still counts and it is essential that pupils are attending and completing work.

We will be running Easter Revision sessions for pupils in a number of subjects should your child wish to attend. Details of this will follow.

We do not yet know the final date after which pupils no longer need to attend school. As soon as I know this, I will communicate it with you.

The exam results day is 12th August 2021.

We will be briefing pupils with regards this when they return to school. **We are holding a briefing via Microsoft teams for Parents on 23rd March at 6pm**. More details and a link will follow shortly.

We are aware that some of our pupils and parents might feel frustrated that these end of year assessments are taking place. However, pupils should view these as a final opportunity to show us what they can do in order to help us recognise their achievements.

I look forward to the return of our pupils next week. In the meantime if you have concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours faithfully

Ms T Wilden
Headteacher