



Dear Parent/Carer,

Let me start by wishing you a (belated) very happy new year. I hope you and your family managed to have a relaxing (and safe!) break over the Christmas period despite the unusual circumstances.

The recent announcement by the Secretary of State relating to the awarding of end of key stage qualifications and the exam season scheduled for May/June 2021 has left schools, parents/carers and, most importantly, students, feeling a little confused and lost.

I feel it is only right to report the situation as it is at time of writing. Unfortunately, I do not have all the answers to all of the questions that are being raised but hope to clarify exactly what has and hasn't been said.

I am sure many of you will have heard the announcement that the GCSE and AS and A level exams will not go ahead this year and will instead be replaced by a 'form of teacher assessed grades'.

We don't have the full details of what these 'teacher assessed grades' will look like, and I believe the devil will be in the detail. Below is a section of the minister's statement, and I would like to highlight that it states that the details of these teacher assessed grades are still to be fine-tuned, and therefore we are not in a position to speculate as to what the final process will look like.

***The department and Ofqual had already worked up a range of contingency options. While the details will need to be fine-tuned in consultation with Ofqual, the exam boards and teaching representatives, I can confirm now that I wish to use a form of teacher-assessed grades, with training and support provided to ensure these are awarded fairly and consistently.***

Until we have the full details, the best approach students can have is to keep focused on learning, keep working hard and producing their very best work, keep attending live lessons, and make sure that students do all they can to make the end of Key Stage 4 a successful one. As stated above, we are still awaiting the final details of the consultation but there will be a requirement for evidence to be provided for the grades we award. It is therefore essential that we make sure that we cover all the eventualities that could come out of the consultation process.

The implications of the pandemic, the move to online learning and the disruption to exams are not our students' fault. However, they are having to deal with the brunt of the implications of it. I would like to reassure all of you that every member of staff at school will work tirelessly to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by these events and will do all we can to ensure that the outcomes are the best they can be and progression to the next stage, be it sixth form, college or somewhere else, will be as seamless as in any 'normal' year.

As we get more information coming in to the school as to the exact details around the proposed plans for awarding GCSE's, I will of course write to you again. In the meantime, please stay safe and should you have any questions around exams, please do not hesitate to contact me. Any questions around online learning should either be sent to individual subject teachers, your child's tutor or head of year.

Yours sincerely,

P Whitehouse (Assistant Headteacher)