



11<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

## Key Information on the 2021 Grading in Year 11

Following the recent announcements from Ofqual and the Department for Education we have now had time to consider the approach that we believe is the fairest way to assess your child for their forthcoming GCSE and Vocational qualifications. Please be aware that full advice and guidance is still being drawn up by Ofqual and the exam boards so we may need to make adjustments to our plans if this becomes necessary.

We intend to base Year 11 grades on 3 pillars of evidence:

- 1. December 2020 Mock exams:** We informed you in November that should exams not happen as expected in 2021 the results from these exams would help inform our 2021 Centre Assessed Grades. This result gives us the most accurate picture of their progress for their full time in school until lockdown 3. Please be assured that students grades in this pillar will assume that students would make expected progress over the rest of their course. This means that if a student for example achieved a grade 4 for geography in December we know they would progress in most cases to a higher grade by the summer.
- 2. Portfolio of work:** This will be at least 5 pieces of work that have been assessed with GCSE criteria over their time in year 11 with the majority of this work still to be done over the coming weeks. This could take the form of essays in English or topic based assessments in other subjects. For subjects with coursework, this coursework will form a significant part of this pillar of evidence. In most cases this work will be completed over the coming weeks up to and just after Easter. The portfolio pieces of work will only be based on work that students are either currently doing, finishing over coming weeks or have already done.
- 3. National Standards Tests:** The final pillar of evidence will be from National tests which are currently being written by the exam boards. These will allow us to get a really good picture of how well students have understood the work they have been tested on. These tests will be done under exam conditions although we expect them to still be held in classrooms. The tests will take place in the final 2 weeks before May half term and we hope to be able to send you a timetable of the test schedules by Easter to allow your child to prepare accordingly. We will be able to let you know more about these tests when they have been sent out to schools by the exam boards. Please be assured that if your child is eligible for relevant exam concessions such as extra time, reader or scribe this will be planned for. In the same way as the portfolio of work, the National Tests will only test work that students are either currently doing, finishing over coming weeks or have already done.

Where relevant Portfolio pieces and National tests will be moderated with at least one more teacher in the department to ensure that they agree the grade for each piece of evidence is fair. We will then take a balanced view of all the information to arrive at a final subject grade. Strengths in some areas of evidence may compensate

for areas that are not quite as good. The Subject Leader along with another teacher from the department will check they agree with your child's grade. Members of the SLT will also check grades and Mrs Seddon will finally authorise them as a true reflection of all the evidence submitted.

There are some exceptions to the 3 pillar model below:

Art: This will be fully based on the Portfolio coursework. Vocational: We are still awaiting further guidance on how Btecs and other vocational qualifications will be graded but we expect it to follow a similar model. Other subject endorsements: For GCSE English and MFL spoken language exam boards will collect grades and evidence will not be required.

The most important message we can give the students is that their effort and application over the coming weeks will determine the grade they finally receive this year. Unlike last year students have a great deal of control over their grade and have everything to gain from working hard. We are confident that students this year will receive as good a set of qualifications as previous years that will put them in a strong position to make their next steps.

We have not yet set the leaving date for Year 11 so please you can ensure their full attendance at school until June 18<sup>th</sup>. We will be in touch to confirm the leaving date as well as 6<sup>th</sup> form transition arrangements. **Please note that GCSE results day is now Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August**, which is an earlier date than originally published.

We are confident that our process will produce grades that are accurate, robust and most importantly fair. If students are unhappy with their grade, there is a right to appeal which is initially a check to see if an administrative error has been made. If there has been no error made and the students are still unhappy then the school can appeal to the exam board on the student's behalf. If this happens then there are 3 possible outcomes; the grade stays the same which is the most probable outcome, the grade goes up or the grade goes down. Finally, if students still feel they are capable of achieving a higher grade then there will be an Autumn series of exams students can sit in one or more subjects should they choose.

If you have any queries or concerns about the grading in 2021, or indeed any aspect of your child's progress, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Ms Saltariche and we will be pleased to answer any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your continued support

Mr D. Coyle

Deputy Headteacher