



February 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

GCSE examinations - update

Contingency arrangements

At the time of writing, it seems almost certain that the 2022 examinations season will see a return to pupils sitting their GCSEs in the same way they did in 2019 i.e. formal written papers in the sports hall. However, in the unlikely event that the 2022 exams cannot go ahead due to further Covid disruption, the pupils' grades will instead be determined by their teachers, using a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) approach. This means that their teachers will gather evidence, through the mock exam results, classwork, homework and other assessments, to help them determine those grades.

Pupils are also sitting some mini-assessments in the last fortnight of this term based on GCSE questions or using past papers as a means of preparing for the GCSE exams. These assessments will take place during the timetabled lessons under exam conditions. For this year, this is simply a matter of formalising the approach used in every 'normal' school year whereby pupils prepare for practice questions to develop their exam technique and improve their understanding of the exam requirements.

To enable pupils to prepare for these assessments, they will be receiving a copy of the schedule via Firefly but a copy is attached for your information. As these assessments could potentially provide evidence to support the awarding of TAGs, it is important that your son/daughter prepares thoroughly for them.

Revision classes

There is comprehensive provision at lunchtime and after school to support your son/daughter. This is to complement the work they should be doing at home. A schedule for these classes is attached. Pupils will be guided by staff to prioritise subjects where they are facing the greatest challenges and where they would benefit the most.

Key changes to this summer's exams

Exam boards have recognised the major disruption that pupils have faced with their learning during the pandemic and this is reflected in two significant changes for the 2022 exam season.

Advance information

The exam boards have published 'advance information' on their websites. This is subject by subject, specification by specification, specific outlines of the focus of questions across many of the summer exams. There is far too much information to summarise here; however, your child's teacher will be familiar with this information and will use it to direct the exam preparation over the coming weeks.

Pupils will also get formulae sheets for GCSE maths exams and updated equation sheets for GCSE physics and combined science exams, so they won't have to memorise as much as in previous years.

Grading of this summer's exams

OFQUAL have stated 'When grading exams in 2022, we will aim for a grading standard that reflects a midway point between 2021 and 2019. This means that exam boards will set the grade boundaries so that more students get higher grades in 2022 than before the pandemic. This will provide a safety net for those students who might otherwise just miss out on a higher grade. We have taken this decision to reflect the disruption that you as a cohort have experienced already in your course.'

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours faithfully,

Mr A S Barnett
Assistant Headteacher