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Dear Students and Parents

Exam Grading update for Y11, 12 and 13 students

This letter is aimed primarily at Y11 and Y13 students (and their parents) but will also be relevant for a small number of Y12 students who were planning to sit AS exams this summer.

There is a lot of information that we will need to share with you over the coming weeks about how we plan to tackle the challenge of setting exam grades for Y11-13 students, however, I don't want to overload you with too much in one go. In that vein, I will aim to set out a broad overview here with clarity over timescales and when assessments will take place. In future updates I will focus more on the actual assessments and grade setting process as well as the appeals procedures.

Firstly, I need to draw attention to the fact that the system this year is very different from last year as outlined in the table below.

Table with 2 columns: 2020 and 2021. Rows compare exam grading criteria such as 'Assign grades based on grade most likely to be achieved' vs 'reflect the standard at which a student is working', and 'Submit a grade and rank order to the exam boards' vs 'Submit a grade - no requirement for a rank order'.



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Secondly, due to the fact that Y11 and 13 have not sat end of year exams in Y10/12 or Mock Exams in Y11/13 there is clearly a need for us to conduct some internal assessments to support and inform the grade setting process this year. I am conscious of the need to try and balance this with a desire to put in place a system that is manageable and appropriate for students given they have missed so much of their education over the last two years. Some of our considerations include:

- Students have been out of school for over two months so will need some time to settle back into routines
- We need a clear end point for course teaching after which time in school will be spent assessing and preparing for assessment
- We want to avoid replicating a normal exam season/timetable
- We need to be sensitive to the understandable anxiety and worry that some of our students will be feeling as they return to school and prepare for these assessments

In addressing these issues we have decided on the following:

Week beginning	Information
8 March	Return to school for all students Normal timetable followed
15 March	Normal timetable followed
22 March	Normal timetable followed. End of course teaching for the majority of GCSE courses except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art - this is portfolio based assessment only • Vocational courses
29 March	Easter break (2 weeks) Opportunity for revision, particularly for Assessment Week A
12 April	ASSESSMENT WEEK A
19 April	Normal timetable Focus on revision, recap and consolidation as preparation for Assessment Week B
26 April	
3 May (Bank Holiday Monday)	ASSESSMENT WEEK B
10 May	Normal timetable Focus on revision, recap and consolidation as preparation for Assessment Week C
17 May	
24 May	ASSESSMENT WEEK C

Our approach will provide students with a 3-week period on their return to school to readjust and get back into established routines without having to worry about assessments. Teaching for the vast majority of courses will end on Friday 26 March, prior to the Easter break, however, art and some vocational



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courses will continue with teaching due to the way the course is assessed, i.e. coursework or portfolio rather than exams. Teachers will advise students on arrangements that differ from the majority.

The Easter break will provide time for revision in preparation for Assessment Week A and after this we will use the next two weeks to recap, revise and consolidate ahead of Assessment Week B; the same pattern precedes Assessment Week C. In order to provide further support to students we will, by Friday 18 March, provide:

1. A teaching overview for each course setting out:
 - a. What topics/content has been taught
 - b. When the topics/content was covered
 - c. What parts, if any, of the syllabus has not been taught
2. An Assessment Week overview for each subject that signposts the topics/content to be assessed to help focus student revision

All content that has been taught could be assessed but we will place less emphasis on assessing the work taught during the first lockdown, i.e. March-June 2020.

How many assessments will students undergo within an Assessment Week?

The general rule we are working to is:

- Y11: one assessment per course
- Y12: one assessment per course
- Y13: two assessments per course

Assessments will be classroom-based and limited to 45 mins, i.e. within a lesson

Having said I didn't want to overload you, this letter is now stretching to 3 sides of A4! Despite this, I hope that you will find the information helpful in clarifying our approach and timescales. I'm afraid I am not yet in a position to clarify the last day of school for Y11 and Y13 students as I am awaiting further information from the Department for Education but we do know that grades need to be submitted to all exam boards by Friday 18 June at the latest.

Thanks for making it to the end of this letter and do let me know if you have any questions about the information I have shared.

Yours faithfully

Kieran McGrane
Headteacher

