

Assessments for 2021

Dear Yr 11 parent/carer,

We wrote to you previously that the body responsible for qualifications in England (Ofqual) has put in place different arrangements for awarding grades in 2021 based on teacher assessments. Students have already taken mini-mock exams and are now due to take the next set of assessments/exams over the next three weeks. It is important to note that these exams that students will be taking over the next three weeks will not be the only assessment evidence that is used to determine students' grades. We will also take other assessment evidence into consideration. Therefore, we want to reassure students that although they should work hard for these exams, they should not be unduly anxious. We simply want them to do their best to show what they can do and produce good evidence of their capability.

High Control assessments

Your child would have already received their assessment/exam timetable for the next three weeks. Although these assessments are internal, students would be expected to do them in school at the same time as all the other students. This is the best way to prevent some students having advance knowledge of the content of these bespoke papers and therefore ensure that all the students have a fair chance. For these reasons, we will not be providing any opportunity for students to take these assessments outside of school or at different times.

We know that some students would prefer to take assessments under classroom conditions as they feel they have had minimal experience of taking assessments under controlled conditions in an examination hall. However, we are obliged to have some assessments under high control conditions with special arrangements and adjustments in place for students who are justly entitled to them. We also need to ensure that there is a mix of different staff invigilating the different exams to minimise and mitigate any bias which might advantage some students over others. We would also want to advise students that they must not have mobile phones or any notes whilst sitting in the exam hall as this will invalidate their assessment.

We are aware that some students need further reassurance, which is why we will be having a "run-through" for students this Friday afternoon. This would enable students to become very familiar with what is expected of them, and get used to the seating positions and the atmosphere of the assessment rooms. We are confident that after Friday students will be reassured and confident of the processes involved in these assessments. We know that they will be fine.

Exam grades

Although this year is different from previous years in many ways, one constant remains. Students will only know their final grades when the results are released by the exam board in August. It is worth noting that the exam boards have an external verification process to moderate grades awarded by teachers. So, students must not assume that any mark/grade in a specific assessment will be their final grade. However, students will be subsequently told the specific assessments which are contributing to their grades but teachers will not be sharing the marks relating to the final set of assessments with students. Please note that Ofqual has stated that it is considered malpractice for any student to know their grades before then, so students must not pester teachers or any member of staff to find out their results before results day.

Visual Arts and Performing Arts students

Students taking qualifications in Visual and Performing Arts will not be taking any examinations but will be expected to continue working on their portfolios/assessed pieces up to the end of May. Therefore, students must remain in school/attend school for these lessons to ensure that they complete their work to the highest standard before grades are awarded.

MFL speaking assessments

Students taking French and Spanish are expected to participate in speaking assessments on the morning of the 5th and 6th June. Students will only be expected to be in between 9am and 11:00am. Their MFL staff have communicated expectations to them in lessons.

Staying on site

There will be no form time for students during their assessments, instead they will be registered in the exam hall. Students must arrive punctually to school at 9.30 am and wait in the upper quad to be lined up accordingly.

Once an exam has finished, if a student DOES NOT have an exam in the afternoon or a Visual or Performing Arts lesson they must leave the site. There is no provision for supervised independent study during the school day for those who are not in the exam hall. It is expected that students go straight home and prepare for their next exams. **If they have an afternoon exam or PA/VA lesson to stay for, students remain in school for lunch in the Year 11 playground area.** The exam timetable is on the website under the parents tab and hard copies have been shared with all the students.

GCSE Exam Results

Further details will be forthcoming with regards to GCSE Exam results Day, Thursday 12th August.

We appreciate that the past year has been very difficult for you and for your child and we understand the uncertainty with respect to examinations and qualifications that you and your child must be feeling. We want the best for all our students and we are confident that the evidence base that we use for our students will result in just and fair outcomes for all. Please continue to encourage your child to continue working hard and reassure them over the next few weeks.

Kind regards

Dr O'Brien-Coker
Deputy Head Teacher
Achievement