



3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

## Year 13 Exams Update

Soon we will be sending out a timetable for the Year 13 mock exams in January, and guidance on content will be shared by subject staff over the next couple of weeks to aid revision.

In this letter, we hope to answer some of the questions you may have at this time. You may also wish to read the letter to students, from Ofqual's Chief Regulator, Jo Saxton:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-letters-arrangements-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022/letter-to-students>

Our main focus is to help students to prepare for the external exams in Year 13, and these mocks should help them to answer the questions:

- What can I do well?
- What do I need to do to improve?

### What if exams are cancelled again?

Ofqual have asked schools to plan ahead so that assessments students undertake this year could be used as evidence. Any 'grades' that are awarded for mock exams and other assessments are not TAGS, and Ofqual have told us that:

*"Teachers may tell the student the grade at which their performance in the assessment indicates they have performed. They should also be clear that the marking and grading have not been quality assured. Teachers must make it clear to their students that any grade used to indicate the level at which the student has performed is not a TAG. It will not be possible for a teacher to determine a TAG unless and until we set specific guidance on the determination of TAGs for 2022, which we will only do if exams are cancelled."*

In addition to these mock examinations, we are planning further opportunities to assess students to meet the guidance for TAGs. This does not mean that there will be no other assessments in lessons. Again, our main priority is to prepare students to get the best result they can in the external examinations.

We do need to keep any papers that could be used as evidence for TAGs, but students will go through these in lessons and may be given copies.

### Mock grades and feedback

When mock papers are returned, teachers may give an indication of a grade an answer may have been awarded, and answers will have been marked using exam board specific guidance, but grade boundaries are set by the exam boards (with supervision by Ofqual) at the end of the marking period. This means it is only once all the papers have been marked that the awarding body will set the boundaries. Although exam boards endeavour to set exam papers to the same level of difficulty each year, there will naturally be small variations in the level of challenge on the papers, and as a result, grade boundaries change each year to reflect the difficulty of the paper. This ensures that the standards are maintained from one year to the next and avoids grade inflation

In assessments, and in particular mock exams, we use practise questions from previous years, along with sample questions. Our aim is to provide students with exam questions they have not seen before so they are prepared for

the summer exams. We can apply our best estimate of grade boundaries to past papers and parts of them, but they can only provide an indication of performance.

We do need to keep any papers that could be used as evidence for TAGs, but students will go through these in lessons and may be given copies.

**How do teachers give a predicted grade?**

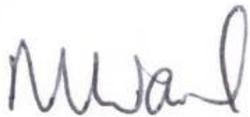
We use a range of evidence and our experience to offer a professional judgement of a current predicted grade; the grade we believe a student is most likely to achieve based on evidence so far. The compilation of a range of exam style answers produced across a student's studies to date informs this prediction. It is to help students understand where they are currently at to help them make future plans.

**What is the UCAS prediction?**

This is the best grade we think a student could achieve at the end of Year 13 and is used for UCAS applications. We consider a student's full potential, so in many cases this can be higher than the current predicted grade.

Please do get in touch if you have any questions, and if there any further ways that we can support you and/or your child.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Ward', written in a cursive style.

Miss M Ward

**Assistant Headteacher**

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