

16th March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Year 11 GCSE Awarding Process 2021

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for being so patient over this period of waiting for news about our grading process. We have spoken to students in school directly about our plans and now I can follow this up with a more complete summary.

The government and exam boards are releasing (what we hope to be) final plans for awarding grades by Easter. What we already know (from Ofqual documentation released at the end of February 2021) is that the school will be asked to recommend grades for students in each of their subjects and submit these to exam boards by **18th June**. We must have a breadth of evidence to recommend a grade.

For the most part, our students in Year 11 already have a first mock for all subjects, and those who have coursework subjects have been working towards completing projects. Students have also, of course, been competing pieces of marked work throughout their courses. For most students, however, it is likely that they will produce their best work towards the end of their courses so we want to make the most of the opportunity now to secure some further evidence on which to base grades.

We have nine working weeks prior to the May half term. Going forward, the main aim over these weeks will be to teach/re-teach course content and to collect further evidence in order to allocate GCSE grades securely. Work taught over lockdown will certainly support the students through this process.

In the majority of Year 11 lessons, students will be preparing material and then completing a piece of work in class which will be marked. These pieces of work may take the form of parts of a mock exam or a short test. Students will generally complete these pieces of work in classrooms. The pieces of work will happen be completed at different times, in different subjects, across the coming weeks. We will share with you the schedule as far as is feasible (an initial schedule is attached to this letter but please be aware that this is subject to change). Students will know what they are preparing for and will be fully aware of which pieces of marked work will eventually make up their 'folder of evidence' for a subject. Teachers will aim to use students' 'best work' as much as possible; however, if the best work is multiple pieces covering only one area of the GCSE content, then other evidence will likely be needed to allocate the overall GCSE grade.

As our students complete individual pieces of work, we will give some feedback, and an indication of level for that piece of work, but we will not be able to discuss projected or actual overall grades. We will submit our recommended grades to examination boards by 18th June, following a process of external verification. Exam boards will then moderate and may request student evidence folders from us.

As noted, the deadline for schools to submit GCSE results to examination boards is 18th June 2021. The administration for this will take approximately two weeks, therefore all Year 11 work to be used in Year 11 evidence folders must be handed in by the May half term, allowing the two weeks following this to be the administrative period. There are just under nine weeks in school before we break up for the May half term, so time is of the essence and attendance at school is vital. As you know from my recent communication we have moved our next INSET day to 7th June to facilitate the evidence collection and grade recommendation process. It may be that we need to invite some Year 11 students in to complete additional work during the final two weeks between 7th June and 18th June and we will contact you if this is the case.

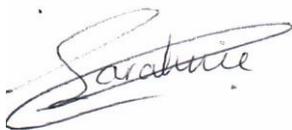
Please help us to make sure that your son/daughter is well set up for the weeks ahead. Making sure that they are getting plenty of sleep, eating well, and avoiding the temptations of game consoles and mobile phones will be crucial. A strong final push for the next two months will make a big difference. We are aware of the stress some Year 11 students may be feeling and we are ensuring good pastoral support in school for them.

GCSE results day this year will be on **12th August 2021** where exam boards will release final grades to us following their own processes and students will be able to come into school (as in normal years) to collect their statements of result.

As you can imagine, the GCSE recommendation procedure is a huge undertaking for the school, but we are confident that it will work well. Our staff are well equipped for it, and absolutely committed to the task at hand, and we have the privilege of working with a wonderful cohort of Year 11 students this year.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions at any time.

Yours sincerely,

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

Mrs S Price
Headteacher