



COVID-19 UPDATE 9

7th January 2021, 1.30pm

Dear Parents/Carers,

Exam Arrangements for Years 11, 12 and 13: Immediate Action Required

Yesterday, the government confirmed that GCSEs, AS and A Level exams will not go ahead this summer. We have been informed that there will be a '*form of teacher assessed grades with training support provided to schools to ensure these are awarded fairly and consistently*'. The government also confirmed that schools and colleges can continue with the examinations for vocational and technical qualifications due to be taken during January 2021.

As Headteacher, I wish to provide you with some advice and guidance, firstly relating to the January vocational exams and also in relation to the GCSE and A Level exams that were due to take place in June. I apologise for the extremely short notice, but in case government guidance changed once again, I wanted to be sure that the information provided below is in line with the latest guidance.

Year 11 - January Exams

Given the circumstances of the national lockdown, rapidly increasing rate of infection and the large number of students in Year 11 who are scheduled to take exams in January, our strong advice is that students should not take the scheduled vocational exams in January. This is based upon the risks of transmission of the virus whilst travelling to and from school; potentially being in school all day when government instruction is that schools must be closed to all students other than those who are vulnerable or the children of critical workers; coupled with the logistical challenge of undertaking COVID testing and maintaining enhanced social distancing measures whilst they are in school.

I appreciate that this may be very disappointing for your son/daughter, therefore we are providing some optionality here which will not affect the final outcome that your son/daughter receives. We have been advised by the DfE that students will '*still be able to progress fairly*' and will not be penalised should they not sit the exams.

If your child is determined to sit their scheduled exam(s), they may do so. If this is the case, you must confirm with the Exams Office that they are attending by emailing pjhsexams@princehenrys.worcs.sch.uk by 7pm this evening. The following exams are due to take place on Monday 11th January at 1.30pm:

RO21/01: Health & Social Care - Essential Values of Care (1.30-2.30pm)
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RO81/01: Creative Media Pre-Production Skills (1.30-2.45pm)

Should your son/daughter wish to sit these exams, our strong advice is that they are COVID tested at school on Friday 8th January 2021 between 9am and 3pm. We have a test centre located within the Arts Centre in the Drama Studio. All staff and students who are currently in school are being routinely tested. Students in Year 11 will need to bring with them a signed parental consent form

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Working in collaboration with Bredon Hill and St Egwin's Middle Schools

which [can be downloaded here](#) (or can be found in Covid Updates area of the website). Should a student test positive, they will not be able to sit the exam and they will have to undertake a PCR COVID test and follow self-isolation procedures unless the PCR test comes back as negative.

Please note: students will need to make their own travel arrangements in order to come into school for their COVID test. They must be in full school uniform for both the COVID test and for their exams, and wear a face covering.

Years 12 and 13 - January Exams

Mrs Wall, our Exams Officer will post home updated timetables for all students scheduled to take exams in January due to room changes.

We understand that students in Years 12 and 13, as well as their teachers, very much want the opportunity to sit these exams. Therefore, due to the comparatively small number of candidates involved, we are providing some optionality which will not affect the final outcome that your son/daughter receives. **Our strong advice is for students in Years 12 and 13 to sit these exams, However, should anyone be unable to, or not feel in a position to sit these exams, we have been advised by the DfE that students will 'still be able to progress fairly' and will not be penalised.**

Should students wish to sit these exams in January, our strong advice is that they are COVID tested at least one day before they sit the exam. We have a test centre located within the Arts Centre in the Drama Studio. All staff and students who are currently in school are being routinely tested and students in Years 12 and 13 can provide their own consent. Here is [a link to the consent form](#) if they wish to download the form; alternatively a copy can be collected from the test centre. Should a student test positive, they will not be able to sit the exam and they will have to undertake a PCR COVID test and follow self-isolation procedures unless the PCR test comes back as negative.

In the first instance, we will assume that students in Years 12 and 13 will take these exams unless they confirm with the Exams Office that they are not attending by emailing pnhsexams@princehenrys.worcs.sch.uk by 9.30am on Friday 8th January 2021. Furthermore, should students develop any symptoms after this deadline, but prior to their exam, then they need to arrange for a PCR test outside of school and follow the self-isolation guidance.

COVID Testing Arrangements

Please note: students will need to make their own travel arrangements in order to come into school for their COVID test. They must be in full school uniform for both the COVID test and for their exams and wear a face covering.

Exam & Date	COVID Testing Arrangements
583002: HSC - Equality, Diversity & Rights - YEAR 12 (Monday 11 th January, 9.30am)	Friday 8 th January - 9am-3pm
584301: Media Productions & Audiences - YEAR 12 (Tuesday 12 th January, 1.30pm)	Monday 11 th January - 9am-3pm
584701: Science Fundamentals - YEAR 12 (Tuesday 12 th January, 1.30pm)	Monday 11 th January - 9am-3pm
31761A/B: Information Technology Systems, Unit 2 YEAR 12 & 13 (Wednesday 13 th & Thursday 14 th Jan)	Monday 11 th January - 9am-3pm
584502: Pre-Production & Planning - YEAR 13 (Friday 15 th January, 1.30pm)	Thursday 14 th January - 9am-3pm
583104: HSC - Autonomy & Physiology - YEAR 13 (Monday 18 th January, 9.30am)	Friday 15 th January - 9am-3pm

A Levels and GCSEs

The government announced that GCSE and A Level examinations will not take place this summer. Whilst the school has not received instructions as to how the teacher assessed grades will be determined, I would like to share with you the process that we undertook last year to determine the Centre Assessed Grades. **I appreciate that this is very difficult, but please could I ask you not to contact subject teachers, Heads of Department or Heads of Year about individual grades.** They will not be in a position to provide you with any further information than what you have already received. With well over 4,000 individual exam grades to be determined, this is an enormous process.

In summer 2020, the assessment criteria was based upon a holistic professional judgement from teachers, balancing the different sources of evidence. Teachers and Heads of Department had a good understanding of their students' performance and how they compared to other students within the department/subject that year, as well as in previous years.

Heads of Department and teachers considered each student's performance over the course of study and made a realistic judgement of the grade that each student would have been most likely to get if they had taken their exam(s) in a subject and completed any non-exam assessment that summer.

In coming to this holistic judgement, we were asked to assume that it was no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade that year, compared to previous years.

We ensured the judgements were objective, and they were strictly evidence-based, using a range of robust internal and external moderation measures.

That evidence included:

- Records of each student's performance over the course of study, including for example progress review data, classwork, bookwork, and/or participation in performances in subjects such as Music, Drama and PE
- Performance in any non-exam assessment (NEA), even if this had not been fully completed
- Performance in any class or homework assessments and exams taken over the course of study
- Previous results attained by former cohorts at Prince Henry's in each subject
- The performance of last year's students compared to those in previous years
- Any other relevant information

The caveat here is that we have not received guidance in relation to how this year's grades will be determined. However, I do not imagine that it will be dissimilar to the process followed in 2020.

Mock (Internal) Exams

Currently, the government has confirmed the closure of schools until at least the February half-term. Year 13 are scheduled to take mock exams between 22nd and 26th February (immediately after half-term). These students should continue to work towards these examinations and, should we find that the closure period is extended, Mrs Lungley and Mrs Webb will provide further guidance.



Likewise Years 11 and 12 should continue to work towards their mock exams which are scheduled for March and April/May respectively.

Whilst I appreciate all this seems uncertain, even though the exams might not take place, revision for an exam is never lost or wasted and, in fact, it is knowledge gained.

Non-Examined Assessments (NEAs)

We have had no clarity yet in relation to NEAs and therefore the best advice I can give at the moment is as follows:

- Where students can do so safely within Government guidelines, we are encouraging them to continue with NEAs until we receive further guidance from the exam boards.
- This advice is for the students' own sense of satisfaction and preparation for their next steps in their educational journey.

In summary, my message is that students need to remain focused. I must praise the students, because the feedback I have received is that they have been wonderful in their live lessons. Whilst I appreciate that nothing compares to being in school for face-to-face lessons, as the parent of a son who is in his third year at university and studying remotely, the independent study skills that your child is developing during remote learning will stand them in very good stead for their potential further education studies or employment after Prince Henry's.

Stay safe. With best wishes,

Yours sincerely



Dr A Evans
Headteacher