



COVID-19 UPDATE 12

25th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: GCSE, Vocational, AS and A Level Grade Assessment Process

We are sure that many of you will be closely following today's news regarding the process that the exam regulator Ofqual has announced for the determining of grades for those students who were due to take GCSE, vocational, AS and A Level exams this summer. Detailed information is still being released and, as usual, we will provide you with updates when necessary.

However, at Prince Henry's we feel that it is important to provide our community of students, parents and staff with as much information in as timely a way as we can in order to reassure you and give an understanding of the approach that we will be following. Firstly, the information provided by ministers and Ofqual is broadly in line with what was anticipated by school leaders across the country and similar to the process that was followed last year, when Centre Assessed Grades were used to determine final KS4 and KS5 results. In summary, this is what Gavin Williamson (Secretary of State for Education), the Department for Education and Ofqual have confirmed in a press release issued this morning:

- *'Students will receive grades awarded and determined by teachers, with pupils only assessed on what they have been taught*
- *Teachers will be able to draw on a range of evidence when determining grades, including the optional use of questions provided by exam boards, as well as mock exams, coursework, or other work completed as part of a pupil's course, such as essays or in-class tests. No algorithm will be used.*
- *Teachers will submit grades to exam boards by 18 June, allowing as much teaching time as possible before teachers make their assessments.*
- *Results days for GCSE, AS, A level and some vocational qualifications will take place in the week of 9 August - moved forward from the week of the 23 August. These earlier dates provide additional time for appeals to be completed, so students reliant on those outcomes to achieve their university offer have the best chance of accessing a place.*
- *To support teachers in making their judgements, exam boards will provide detailed guidance before the end of the spring term.*
- *Students studying vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) that are often taught alongside GCSEs and A levels on one or two year courses, and used for university or college places, will also receive grades assessed by teachers rather than sitting exams.*
- *Schools, colleges and other educational settings will conduct multiple checks - such as checking consistency of judgements across teachers and that the correct processes were followed - to ensure as much fairness as possible.*
- *At the same time, exam boards will conduct their own checks, through a combination of random sampling and more targeted scrutiny where they identify cause for concern.'*

In addition, exam boards will be sending assessments in all subjects to schools prior to the Easter holidays, for use before 18th June (the deadline date for the submission of grades to exam boards). It will be optional as to whether schools use these papers, which may include questions from previous exams. The tests will be taken in class, rather than exam halls, with no fixed time limit for their duration, and will be marked by teachers. The intention is that regardless of how much time students might have missed out of school, they will have questions on a topic they will have studied. It is our current intention to make use of the assessments sent out to schools by the exam boards to provide an additional piece of evidence which teachers can use in supporting their centre assessed grade.

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

Teacher Assessment Process

Although we are awaiting definitive guidance from the exam boards, our expectation is that we will follow a similar process to last year with grades for Prince Henry's students being determined as follows:

A holistic professional judgement from teachers, balancing the different sources of evidence. Teachers and Heads of Department will have a good understanding of their students' performance and how they compare to other students within the department/subject this year, as well as in previous years.

Heads of Department and teachers will consider each student's performance over the course of study and make a realistic judgement of the grade at which each student is performing by the end of their course in each subject, including non-exam assessment (NEA) work. This could include U (ungraded).

In coming to this holistic judgement, schools have been instructed by the DfE to avoid grade inflation and to ensure the grades that centres submit are in line with historic performance data and the academic ability of the year groups. Therefore, it should be no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year, compared to previous years, which is consistent with the approach we adopted in 2020.

We will ensure the judgements are objective, and they will take account of evidence about student performance.

This will include the following, where it is available:

- 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). It is our expectation that students will continue to work on NEAs under the guidance of their teachers and Heads of Department
- Performance in classwork, homework, internal assessments and mock exams taken over the course of study
- Tier of entry in tiered subjects - the centre assessed grades we submit must reflect the tier of entry (9 to 3 for Higher tier; 5 to 1 for Foundation, as well as U)
- Previous results attained by former cohorts at Prince Henry's in each subject
- The performance of this year's students compared to those in previous years
- Any other relevant information

Year 10 and Year 12 Qualification Subjects

It is our understanding that for students in Year 10 who are entered for GCSE Citizenship, Cambridge National IT or GCSE Polish and students in Year 12 who are entered for AS Level Thinking Skills, the EPQ and/or Cambridge Technicals in Health and Social Care, Food or iMedia, the school will be able to submit a centre assessed grade for these subjects. In order for us to have the full range of evidence required, it is our intention to undertake assessments in these areas immediately after the Easter holiday. Further details will be provided to students by their teachers.

Internal Assessments and Key Dates

As confirmed in the COVID Update 11 letter (24th February 2021) Internal assessments will be continuing for all year groups, but dates have been revised to allow students to prepare thoroughly and have face-to-face guidance from their teachers. The new schedule is as follows:

Year 13: Week commencing 15th March (put back from w/c 8th March)
Year 11: Week commencing 22nd March (no change)

Year 10: Tues 27th April (am) ICT or Citizenship; Wed 28th April (am & pm) Polish
Year 12: Wed 28th April and Wed 5th May (both pm) - internal assessments Thinking Skills
Year 10: Week commencing 24th May (put back from w/c 15th March)
Year 9: Week commencing 7th June (put back from w/c 4th May)
Year 12: Week commencing 14th June (put back from w/c 19th April)

Other key dates:

Friday 18th June Deadline for schools to submit grades to exam boards
Tuesday 10th August A Level results day
Thursday 12th August GCSE results day
Autumn 2021 Option for students to take written exams

Finally, we will do everything we can to ensure your child has the grades they truly deserve, and we can promise you that the grades will be real, and the academic integrity of Prince Henry's will be preserved. In the grades that we submit to QCA (The Qualifications & Curriculum Authority), there will not be a "bounce up", neither will there be a "fall". The historic profiles for both year groups will be consistent with our projections. It is therefore absolutely essential that all students continue to maintain focus upon their studies, attend school and complete work set by their teachers.

These are absolutely unprecedented times, and we have given you all the information that we are already aware of. Please could we ask parents not to contact individual members of staff or Heads of Year about your child's grades. We would like to reassure you that the school has incredibly robust internal tracking systems which were supported by external moderation in 2020. Staff cannot give you any further information than what we know from the government. We repeat what we said earlier: the school will act with the utmost professionalism and integrity in relation to all student outcomes.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



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