
Rob Pavey - Headteacher

25 February 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Exam grading this summer

Guidance was released this morning from Ofqual and the Department for Education about how exam grades will be awarded this year. There is a lot of detail to absorb, and further information on timings, and resources to support grading will be released by the exam boards later this term. This is therefore just an initial outline of our approach.

In general, grades will be awarded as we anticipated, based on the professional judgement of teachers. This judgement will come from a range of sources, across the whole of this academic year, although we are still waiting for further detail on the balance between different elements. The important point is that there is not just one thing which dictates the grade. This means that a single very good or very disappointing piece of work (even if it was in the mocks) does not mean that a student will be awarded that grade: this piece of work will provide just one piece of evidence.

You may have heard about exam board assessments on the news this morning. Again, there is a lot of detail for us to absorb, and I cannot yet give you final answers, but I do need to emphasise one point: these assessments are not exams and will not be the only basis of the grades awarded. They are optional (not all subjects or all schools will use them) and will be sat as is most suitable for our students.

We do not yet have the details on these assessments, but I anticipate most subjects doing some in the first half of the summer term. It is not impossible that a few may be conducted at the end of this term, but we will give students as much warning as possible about both the content and the style of the assessments.

We will therefore not run the second Year 11 mocks or the Year 13 mocks before Easter. These will be replaced by these assessments in the manner which is most appropriate for each subject. It is likely that these assessments will take place in class rather than in the exam hall.

- Grades need to be submitted to exam boards by June 18.

- A Level results will be released on August 10.
- GCSE results will be released on August 12.

There will be some form of moderation by the exam board, and students will have the right to appeal a grade they think is unfair. There is a lot of detail that has still not been released on how both of these things will work.

The point about moderation is important: our staff cannot artificially inflate grades, first because it would be wrong to do so, and secondly because it may lead to other students' grades being brought down. Related to this, I do need to stress that the grade awarded will not necessarily be the highest grade ever achieved during the course. There is always a temptation to believe that because a recent assessment was graded 7 or A, it means that it is unfair to be given a 6 or a B: a range of evidence will be used to calculate the final grade.

Please bear with us while we read the information and discuss with colleagues at Cheney and at other schools. We will release more information as soon as we can, and we aim to let students have a timetable of the assessments that they will sit, and the topics to be covered, by the end of term, assuming that we have had all the information by then. In the meantime, the best thing to do is to continue with normal lessons, and to engage fully with all the work that has been set, including extra tutoring or intervention sessions.

Kind regards

Rob Pavey

Headteacher