

15th November 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to start by saying how well Year 11 and Year 13 students are working following all the disruption they have experienced over the last two years of their education.

I wanted to write to you to explain the latest update from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation (Ofqual) regarding their contingency assessment plans in the unlikely event that exams do not go ahead in Summer 2022.

Before I summarise the contingency arrangements, I think it is important I highlight to parents/carers that I will be expressing my concerns to Ofqual about these assessment plans in relation to student wellbeing.

In summary, Ofqual and the DfE are saying:

- Schools should plan distinct assessment opportunities to gather evidence in the unlikely event of Teacher Assessed Grades being used instead of the exams in summer 2022. Their recommended pattern of assessment is:
 - once in the second half of the autumn term
 - again in the spring term
 - and then the first half of the summer term
- These assessments should assess students on a wide range of content, similar to that which they would expect in their summer exams, and across the assessment objectives for the qualification.
- The assessments should be sat under exam-like conditions wherever possible - for example, unseen past papers (full or in part), closed book, timed and with supervision.
- Wherever possible, schools need to either assess all of their students who are taking a particular qualification using the same material at the same time - or use adapted materials if assessments are taken at different times.
- Teachers should mark the assessments in line with published mark schemes and guidance where appropriate. All assessments will be standardised by departments.
- Schools should tell students, before they take each assessment, that their performance in it will be used as part of the evidence to determine their grade if exams are cancelled. Students should be told the topic areas the assessment will cover, but not the specific questions.
- Students should not be given the opportunity to repeat an assessment – for example to improve their mark in response to feedback.

While I have strong reservations about students sitting three high stakes assessments across the year for a number of reasons, and not least their wellbeing, please be reassured we will attempt to organise our approach in a manner that supports students throughout the process. We have our students' best interests at the heart as we work through these DfE and Ofqual plans.

Our Year 13 (January) and Year 11 (February) calendared Trial Exams will form one of these assessment periods for each year group. For these Trial Exams students will be provided with the topics that they will be assessed on and support in terms of revision.

For Year 11, I will be providing further information at the end of this week about assessments that will take place in lessons prior to the Christmas holiday. Here too students will be told the topics to be covered in these assessments.

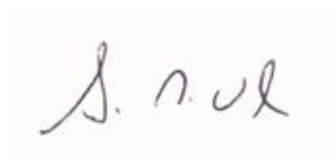
The second assessment period for Year 13 is likely to take place in the week following the Easter holiday and, here too, students will be informed of the topics to be covered in these assessments.

Regarding the summer assessment window, we will wait to see what is happening with the GCSE and Advanced Level official summer exams before we commit to a third window of internal assessments.

I hope what I have written reassures you that while we will, at present, have to follow the DfE and Ofqual directive regarding these assessments, we will support our students throughout this process and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support.

Your faithfully



STEVE WILSON
Headteacher