

26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Students and Parents

I appreciate this is an uncertain and unsettling time and therefore I am keen to provide as much clarity as possible even when, currently, we do not have the final guidance regarding how Yr.13 grades will be awarded.

### **Exam Grade Consultation:**

As you may be aware Ofqual (the exam board regulator), instructed by the government, have issued a consultation on the awarding of grades. This includes consulting on the use of externally set mini tests or tasks. In my response to this consultation, I have argued against the use of these for all the reasons I have highlighted in previous letters to the government and Ofqual. This centres around the disadvantage caused by the variation between regions in student and staff absence related to COVID-19.

Given that this consultation does not close until 29<sup>th</sup> January, and it will take time for Ofqual to process all the responses, I do not expect any firm announcements until February half term at the earliest.

Therefore, I thought it was important to try to provide a plan for the rest of this academic year for Year 13 students and parents.

### **December 2020 Year 13 Report:**

As you are aware, all Year 13 students received a report in December that gave a Most Likely Outcome Grade (MLO). The MLO was explained in the letter that accompanied the report as follows:

- *The MLO represents the grade we anticipate a student will achieve as they develop their knowledge and study skills if they were to continue working as they currently are. Therefore, students with scores of 3, 4 or 5 in attitude to learning, independent study and attendance are likely to have MLOs the same as the Currently Working at Grade or only slightly better. Clearly, in such a situation, an improvement is needed straight away. However, obviously, as students approach the end of courses, the CWA and MLO are more likely to be similar for other students too. Students with scores of 1 or 2 should be congratulated for their continued positive approach to advanced level study.*

### **The cancellation of Year 13 Trial Exams:**

Year 13 Trial Exams scheduled for the week after the Christmas break, were unable to go ahead due to the national lockdown. However, teachers have continued to teach course content and are setting regular assessments.

Normally, following the Year 13 Trial Exams students and parents would receive the Trial Exam results on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January - obviously, this was not possible.

However, teachers will be asked to provide students with a Currently Working at Grade (CWA) which will be issued prior to the Year 13 Parents' Consultations that will take place in the last week of this half term.

### **February Currently Working at Grade and Parents Consultation Meetings:**

This Currently Working at Grade will consider the work students have completed during December and so far this half term during lockdown. This CWA grade can then be discussed at the Parents' consultation meetings in relation to the December CWA grade and December Most Likely Outcome grade. During this consultation, teachers will also discuss targets to help students to continue to improve in the remaining months of Year 13. Teachers will not be able to provide a predicted grade during these consultations as, I expect, there will still be at least three/four months of teaching and assessment taking place before Centre Assessed Grades are submitted.

The parent consultations will take place in the week beginning Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February. You will shortly receive a Microsoft Form to complete regarding these parent consultation meetings.

### **When will Year 13 students finish their courses?**

Gavin Williamson has stated, correctly in my view, that he wants Year 13 students to be taught for as long as possible to ensure the content of courses are covered. However, there is a suggestion in the consultation that final exam grades may be issued to students at the beginning of July. This would suggest Centre Assessed Grades would have to be submitted by the end of May at the latest.

Therefore, I would suggest, although this is still based on no guidance from the government, that Year 13 students can expect to continue being taught either remotely or in school until at least May half term.

Until we hear otherwise, teachers will continue to teach Year 13 students right up to the submission of Centre Assessed Grades.

### **Regarding externally set mini-tests/tasks:**

We await to hear whether such tests/tasks will be used in the awarding of grades process. However, regardless of this decision this does not change the plan outlined in this letter. Once we hear definitively if such tests/tasks are being used and what format they will take, we will adapt our teaching to accommodate them and give students the best opportunity to achieve their personal best grades on them.

### **Regarding Centre Assessed Grades:**

Although the final guidance regarding Centre Assessed Grades is not yet available from Ofqual, I want to reassure students and parents regarding this process. We learnt a great deal from the successful Centre Assessed Grade process we went through last year. Please be assured we will do this fairly, based on all the information we have about students throughout the two years of their studies and recognising the disruption to in-school teaching that has taken place.

We have students' best interests at heart and your Centre Assessed Grades will represent a fair picture of your progress.

Students should try not to worry about this process but rather concentrate on your on-line learning and completing all tasks to the best of your ability.

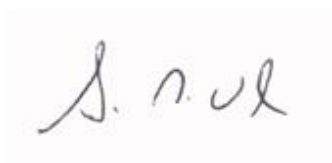
**Conclusion:**

I hope the information in this letter is helpful in explaining our current plans for the rest of this academic year. Teachers will continue to teach Year 13 students either remotely or in school until we are given a finish date by the government.

As I have said before, the best thing students can do is continue to attend their on-line lessons and complete any assessments to the best of their ability.

I will continue to update you as we receive further information.

Yours faithfully



STEVE WILSON  
Headteacher