



From: Deputy Head Academic, Graeme May

15 October 2021

Dear Parents

Important notes for parents with children in exam years (5th & U6th)

1. Specification adjustment / advance information related to impact of Covid on learning

This section assumes that examinations will take place for real this summer and we will not be having to produce Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) as we did for 2020 and 2021. This is the current expectation.

a. Specification adjustment. The decision has been taken by Ofqual to change the way some subjects will be assessed in Summer 2022. This relates at GCSE level only to English Literature, History, Ancient History, Geography and Art and Design. At A Level it only affects Art and Design.

Art and Design at both levels will be assessed by portfolio only; this means there will not be the 'exam' element that usually exists for this subject. For English Literature, History and Ancient History GCSEs, a degree of optionality has been introduced meaning, in effect, that students have to cover less content than they would usually have had to do. In English Literature, this means that students will not be studying for the set texts poetry paper, though they will still be entering for the unseen poetry paper. In Ancient History and History they will be studying for only 3 of the usual 4 units. In Geography there have been adjustments to the expectations related to fieldwork.

b. Advance Information. For all other subjects (excluding French, German and Spanish), the intention is that schools (and thereby students) will be given 'advance information' next term as to what the focus of the exam papers is going to be, with the intention that revision can be more helpfully directed over the final period of teaching. The nature of this 'advance information' will vary subject by subject. The full Ofqual guidance on the matter can be found [here](#).

French, German and Spanish (with the CAIE board) do not fall under Ofqual regulations and it is not clear at the moment what, if any, adjustments are going to be made. We will update when we know more.

2. Contingency planning if schools have to produce TAGs again.

Though it is the current strong expectation that exams will be able to run as normal this summer, experience has taught us that it's as well to have a Plan B. Ofqual are currently consulting on this issue but it seems likely that they will be suggesting to schools that they collect some secure student performance data throughout this year that could be used in the event of exams being cancelled.

What this means is that, from half term onwards, students in 5th and U6th will occasionally be told that they are going to be doing a test that could be used as part of their TAG formation. Those tests will almost

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certainly be done in normal class time but under controlled conditions (i.e. exam conditions) and things like extra time and other Access Arrangements for those who have them will be granted. Students would also have advance notice of such tests (so any 'surprise' tests a teacher might spring on a class would not be usable for TAGs).

Our approach to this will be very much 'business as usual'. Testing is a natural part of the teaching and learning process and students are unlikely to notice any difference from normal practice. However, the regulation is likely to mandate us to inform students if a test *might* be used in TAG formation and we are mindful that this 'announcement' might create anxiety for some students. We would ask you, as parents and guardians, to help us keep the levels of worry as low as possible. As was the case last year, a TAG 2022 situation would enable us to look across a wide range of a student's performances to elect the grade that best reflects their achievement. A single 'less than stellar' performance was not allowed to pull that grade down last year if the overall 'story' suggested a higher grade was justified and we would expect the same to be true this year.

Next term will see both exam year groups doing formal mock exams which would also serve as a key piece of data for us in a TAG scenario. Again, though, TAGs would not be formed solely on the basis of that mock performance.

Yours sincerely

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