



25 November 2021

Dear Year 11 parents and carers

You may have seen that last week the government released an update on plans for the 2022 examinations season.

The first point to make is that the **government are clearly indicating that it is their firm intention that examinations will go ahead in the summer**. Assuming GCSE examinations do go ahead, they have also now issued a range of other decisions. You will be able to discuss subject-specific changes at the upcoming parents' meeting but the main headlines are:

- GCSE Examinations will be more spread out in each subject next summer. The thinking is that if a student gets COVID and misses 10 days of exams, they will not then miss all of the papers in any one subject. They would only miss 1 or 2 papers only, and their grade will then be based on the exams they HAVE sat.
- In GCSE Maths, GCSE Physics and in the Physics element of GCSE Combined Science, students will be given formulae sheets in the exams so they do not need to learn a range of formulae in advance. However, of course, they will certainly need to continue to work on how to apply these formulae.
- 'Advance information' will be provided for all subjects except for GCSE English Literature, GCSE Geography, GCSE History and GCSE Art. This information will be released by no later than 7<sup>th</sup> February (although work continues behind the scenes to try to get this released earlier). If COVID worsens, the government have said they will release this sooner. We do not know yet what this 'advance information' will look like but they have said that any advance information will not be allowed to be taken into the exams.
- 'Optionality' will be introduced in GCSE English Literature, GCSE Geography and GCSE History where we will be able to choose not to teach certain parts of the course and students will therefore not need to answer certain questions in the examinations. Students will be made fully aware of this.
- GCSE Art will be assessed by portfolio only. There will be no Art exams this summer.
- Results days are back to being 1 week apart. GCSE results will be issued on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August



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However, should COVID worsen significantly in the next few months, the government have also announced that GCSE examinations may not run and grades again will be decided in school by teachers based on work that students have completed. These will be known as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs).

**As this is a possibility you should also be aware that:**

- Teacher Assessed Grades will be based on 3 pieces of evidence which will in all likelihood be:
  - The mock exam completed in recent weeks
  - A 2<sup>nd</sup> mock exam that will be held in February
  - A 3<sup>rd</sup> assessment which will be completed in class later in the year under exam conditions
- Students will not know the questions in advance for these assessments, will work independently and will not have access to books / revision notes – just like normal exams
- NEA / coursework / language orals and so on will continue as if exams are going ahead. Should the exams be cancelled, we will then use the grades from these pieces of work to help determine the TAGs
- Maths / Physics / Combined Science assessments would be completed with students using the formulae sheets discussed above
- Students would be tested only on content delivered so far and using past papers or equivalent
- Students would be told that the assessment they are completing is forming evidence for the TAG
- Assessments will be marked in school by staff using exam board mark schemes
- If a student underachieves on one of these 3 assessments, they would not be able to re-sit it again
- Access arrangements (for example extra time, use of laptops, etc.) will apply, as much as possible, as they would for an exam
- Students papers would be retained as evidence of TAGs
- We will not be producing a TAG until we are told to, should the government decide to go down this road. So, we will, of course, tell students the results of a particular assessment but we will not be able to start having any conversations with students about what their final TAG might end up being.



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I hope this summary is useful to you. We are very much planning for now, based on this information, that examinations will go ahead but of course will need to be ready to move to a TAGs process again should we need to.

We will keep you updated.

Your sincerely

Mrs M Smith  
**Principal**



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