



14 January 2021

### Exams update

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

I hope you and your families are well. Apologies for the high frequency of communication from myself at this time but I feel it is imperative that you remain well-informed about the grade awarding process this year.

Yesterday (13 January 2021), Gavin Williamson wrote to the Chief Regulator at Ofqual regarding his thoughts for the awarding of GCSE, A Level and Vocational qualifications this year. Simon Lebus then responded and both letters can be found using these links:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/951797/Letter\\_from\\_Gavin\\_Williamson\\_to\\_Simon\\_Lebus.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951797/Letter_from_Gavin_Williamson_to_Simon_Lebus.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/951778/SL\\_to\\_SOS\\_2021-01-13.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951778/SL_to_SOS_2021-01-13.pdf)

We can take the following points from the above communication:

- GCSE, AS and A levels will be awarded by alternative arrangements this year that will involve the awarding of grades based on teacher assessment.
- Given the disruption our students have faced, we are to teach students for as long as possible this academic year. This will enable our students to maximise learning time before a teacher assessment grade is sought. It will also maximise learning for our students to ensure success as they progress onto further education, higher education or employment.
- A breadth of robust evidence will be used to inform a student's grade.
- Some evidence may be acquired from mandatory externally set tasks or papers that are internally sat, marked and then moderated both internally and externally.
- All grades will be quality assured both internally by departments working closely with school leaders and externally by the exam boards. Schools will receive training and support to ensure quality assurance is of a high standard.
- An algorithm will not be used to determine grades.
- We expect students to be assessed based on what they have learnt, rather than against content they have not had a chance to study.
- Vocational qualifications are likely to be awarded using a similar approach to GCSEs and A Levels, where completed units help determine the overall grade.

It is important to note that at this time, no formal decisions have been confirmed by the government on the grade awarding process. By the end of the week, a two-week

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consultation process will begin which will culminate in Ofqual releasing official guidance to schools. I will inform you about how you can have your say in this consultation as soon as I receive this information.

My message to our students remains unchanged. Please continue to engage with remote learning and 'work hard' to place yourself in the best position for success both this academic year and in your chosen destination next year. We are so proud of the way you have engaged with online lessons and shown such high levels of maturity and resilience. You have my promise that the school is doing everything in its power to ensure you receive the grades in the summer you deserve.

I thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Eardley', written in a cursive style.

**Dr C Eardley**  
**Head of School**