

7th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Year 11 ‘Mock Exam’ grades and forecast (predicted) grades

I want to share with you our plans for awarding forecast (predicted) grades to Year 11 students to support their forthcoming applications for sixth form and college courses.

In ‘normal’ times, Year 11 would by now have sat a full programme of both Year 10 and Year 11 mock examinations, alongside uninterrupted teaching covering almost all the course content. Our forecast (predicted) grades are formulated drawing upon this wide range of performance information alongside the professional judgement of the teacher and school leaders. The usual stability of the national grading system means this process is usually completed with a good degree of accuracy.

As in so many areas, the impact of Covid-19 makes it much harder for us to make such forecasts of potential exam performance in the same way. We know less about how the students might perform in the summer, and we can assume less about what the national grading process will be. As a result, we will be asking Year 11 teachers to use a student’s ‘target grade’ as the starting point for setting their forecast grades in December. This target has previously been shared with you and is known by the students. It is based on a child’s prior attainment and has been adjusted in line with a nationally recognised forecasting model. It is a fair and aspirational starting point for the grade a student should be working towards and capable of achieving with hard work.

In some cases, teachers will exercise their professional judgement and the evidence available to them to adjust these forecast grades up or down. This would only happen when there is clear evidence that the target grade is very unlikely to be met, or very likely to be exceeded. Such evidence might include:

- Significantly better or worse performance in the recent Year 11 assessments.
- Compelling evidence based on effort and attainment in class since September.
- Completion and engagement in home learning since September.

I want to be very clear that this December forecast grade is based on students’ potential rather than a fully secure prediction or a ‘centre assessed grade’ of the type awarded to students in the summer of 2020.

You will notice that we are not reporting on a grade for the assessments that students sat in November. Students have been given feedback on these assessments that identifies the priorities for improvement, and they will be sitting another full series of mock examinations in the spring. We are not able to assign a meaningful grade to these assessments because the boundaries that will be applied in summer 2021 are likely to be significantly different to the most recent comparable series in 2019. To award a ‘grade’ at this stage would be very likely to be inaccurate and could give an entirely false picture to you and the students of their likely outcome in the summer.

We hope and expect to be in a more secure position to make revised forecasts later in the academic year following more assessment in class and the further round of mock examinations we will be conducting in the new year.

I know that many of you are concerned about whether plans for the summer exams will change as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. At present, the government are clear that they intend for exams to proceed, and that is what we are preparing the students for. Should the situation change, we are very confident that we will be in a strong position to support Year 11 to ensure they all secure the best possible outcomes.

Thank you for your support and understanding through these difficult times. If you have any questions about the forecasting of grades, then please do not hesitate to get in touch with us here at college.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S. Rayner".

Miss S Rayner
Vice Principal