

6th October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: Examinations and assessments for year 11 and 13

I am writing just over half way through the first half of the autumn term and overall we have had a good start to this academic year. Currently, when compared to previous terms and the COVID restrictions that were in place the college feels somewhat back to normal. It is a concern that COVID cases in schools and colleges nationally are on the rise however thus far, for the vast majority of students, there has been little disruption to their learning.

Following a consultation over the summer, the DfE and OfQUAL have confirmed their decisions on changes to the assessment of GCSEs and A Levels in 2022. The approach that is to be taken is built on the principles of 'fairness, flexibility and certainty'. This means that it is planned that examinations and other assessments will go ahead but with adjustments to these assessments in some subjects and additional support in others to mitigate some of the pressures on teaching time. The proposal also allows for changes to the amount and timing of adjustments being made should there be any further significant disruption to learning over the coming year.

If exams and other assessments are not able to go ahead next summer, and the DfE and OfQUAL think this is extremely unlikely, then there will need to be a contingency in place. This is something they are planning for and are currently out to consultation. The consultation closes on the 13th October 2021. The proposed contingency arrangements are that grades will be awarded through a Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGS) process similar to that used in summer 2021.

Whilst we do not yet have the guidance on TAGs for this year if they are needed as a contingency the TAG process requires the college to decide grades based on a range of evidence of students' performance. This evidence consisted of, for example, Pre-public exams (PPE) grades, in class exam papers and other assessments and coursework. It is therefore likely that should TAGs be needed we will use grades from the upcoming PPEs to help determine students' overall grades.

The PPE's for year 11 and 13, begin on Monday 8th November and last for one week. Most of these examinations will be held under formal examination conditions in the main hall to emphasise their importance. It is essential that your son/daughter is well prepared for these examinations and so therefore can really demonstrate what they know in each subject at this stage of year 11 or year 13. Preparation should include:

- A focus on the completion of independent study (including GCSE coursework) including attending after college sessions.
- Demonstrate a **positive attitude to hard work and progress** in all of their lessons.
- Producing a revision plan which includes at least 2 hours of revision daily, and keeping to it, including work experience and half term weeks.
- Using the revision resources available for each subject for example, GCSE POD, Kerboodle, Seneca, Dr Frost maths.
- Using active revision techniques to ensure learning is consolidated, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zw8qpbk>
<https://www.cgpbooks.co.uk/info/exams-or-demon-fighting/essential-revision-tips>
- Aim for 100% attendance in the run up to and during the PPE period

Finally, I would like to highlight **two opportunities** we have on the calendar for you to discuss your child's progress. On Thursday 2nd December we have the Year 11 and 13 Progress evening which will focus on how well your child is doing in college. This will be followed on Thursday 13th January 2022 with our annual Year 11 Examinations Information Evening, where we will provide a wide range of information about what to expect from GCSE examinations and coursework and how to ensure your child revises and prepares for their examinations effectively.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely



Mr. L Kilgour
Principal