



Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Update on Summer Examinations and the award of qualifications for progression

I wanted to write to you today to provide you with an update on the current situation regarding the awarding of A Level and Vocational qualifications this summer for students in Year 13.

As I said in my letter to all parents there has been much media speculation as to the workings of the system to allocate grades and mention of some forms of external examination potentially going ahead. I appreciate that this uncertainty is difficult for parents and carers and especially for the children for whom these qualifications represent the culmination of years of study. Last Friday a joint consultation from Ofqual and the DFE was shared with a closing date of the 29th January. The consultation is open to both the students who are affected and their parents and carers as well as those in education and can be found at the following link:

https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2021/01/15/how-2021-could-look-for-students-and-learners-we-want-your-views/?fbclid=IwAR3_xDEVxAe2DAIPINRdixVa1pNX2-2xIJekn0g062buKXgvQORidjgsl

Following the consultation, the Secretary of State for Education will announce the detailed plans for the awarding of qualifications this summer, however, we would like to set out our ambition for the rest of the year in regards to the teaching and assessing of our students in Year 13. It is important to acknowledge that these plans remain fluid and will adapt and change in line with any subsequent guidance released from the Department for Education and the ability to act within the limitations placed upon us by the spread of the virus.

First and foremost, we strongly believe that students are entitled to be taught as much of the remaining courses as is possible. The courses that students are undertaking include important knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills necessary both for progression onto further study and for life beyond school and course leaders are reviewing the content of the curriculum to focus on these key areas. This includes the continued delivery of new content through remote learning continuing up to at the least spring half term and most likely beyond in most subjects. Throughout this time, we hope that students will continue to develop excellent independent learning skills as well as developing an understanding of how they learn through the Practice 4 Progress techniques we have been promoting since the start of this year (these can be found at <http://warlinghamtl.co.uk/> in the students section) .

We also firmly believe that students should be able to demonstrate their learning under test conditions where possible while not being assessed upon any work that they have been unable to complete due to the pandemic. Whilst the picture surrounding external terminal exams in the summer remains unclear, it is important that students work towards a final internal assessment point/exam. Current indications suggest that this may be a paper provided by the examination boards which will then be marked internally, however it could equally be devised by the school and moderated externally. Whatever the exact form this takes, this will provide the opportunity for students to experience a form of terminal exam even if it will be used alongside other assessment methods to determine a calculated grade.

As such, it is our current intention to organise a set of final internal examinations starting in May 2021. We aim to enable these to take place under formal exam conditions and be spread out over a period of about one month. Sitting these exams in May allows teaching staff time to mark the assessments and include significant moderation of both marking and grade allocation based on all available data. Details of the content to be covered in these internal examinations/assessments will be shared by departments well in advance in support of thorough and informed preparation in order that students are given every opportunity to demonstrate their progress.

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It is important to point out that Final Centre Assessed Grades are likely to be based on a variety of data sources, of which this will be only one. Other data sources will include previous KAPS and a range of relevant unit assessments, coursework modules and practical assessments where appropriate and sufficiently rigorous. This includes any such assessment that may be set in the period of remote learning or upon return to school.

Students in Year 13 should continue in their efforts and engagement throughout the remainder of the course, both to ensure an accurate assessment and that they continue to develop as learners.

As part of this process, normally at this time of year, students receive their grades achieved in the Christmas Mocks/KAPS via tracking which is sent home followed by a parents evening; this will still be taking place. Parents evening has been moved to 4th February when you and your son/daughter will get an opportunity to discuss their areas of strength and development from the November/December KAPS. In the days prior to this, the Year 13 Tracking Reports will be published to help frame some of the discussions. It is important to understand that the grades within the tracking will not be used directly in the calculation of the final Centre Assessed Grade. However, KAP raw scores will play a part in this process along with other assessment data.

As previously stated, this planned course of action is an ambition which could potentially change for a number of reasons however providing some degree of clarity and a framework to sustain student motivation and provide something to work towards was important to share at this time. We will of course inform you if there are any changes or developments as soon as possible.

Thank you for your understanding and support in these challenging times, particularly for students in Year 13 and their families in supporting them.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Foster', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Mr P Foster
Headteacher