



The Priory School

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Dear parents/carers,

8th January 2021

You will undoubtedly have been receiving the news this week with a sense of trepidation regarding what will be happening with GCSE grades this summer. When Mrs Pope wrote to you at the start of the week there was still a degree of uncertainty about how students would be awarded, with some talk of core GCSE examinations still going ahead. However, it has now been confirmed that no GCSE examinations will be sat this summer and students' GCSE grades will be based on teacher assessment. Gavin Williamson has stated that a range of 'contingency options' will be finalised soon in order to assist schools and exam boards in the process of awarding grades; we will share more with students and yourselves once we have more information.

Clearly, it has been frustrating for students who have spent considerable time revising for their mock examinations and who are now wondering what their final GCSE grades will be based on. Please be assured that this process will be fair and rigorous, and will be based on a portfolio of evidence. With this in mind, we want to maximise the opportunities during this lockdown as well as the revision that students have already undertaken.

As indicated in Mrs Pope's earlier letter, we have asked all subjects to set one or more remote assessment pieces for students, which will assess them on the content, skills and methods they were preparing for their mock exams. The assessments will not necessarily be the same mock examination paper that students would have sat this January, but will be adapted from those papers to suit the current circumstances. All assessments will be held within scheduled lessons and will take a variety of different formats; this will be communicated to students in advance so they know what to expect, along with any key information students need to be aware of.

Obviously, assessing students remotely poses some challenges, such as the lack of a formal examination context, the difficulties in enabling access arrangements for those who qualify and the submission of work. All of this is being taken into consideration by Heads of Department through careful planning and management, and we will be conducting scrupulous marking and moderation to ensure equitability.

There will not be a published mock exam timetable but teaching staff will communicate which lesson(s) students will have an assessment in; it is likely that each department will place further detail on their individual protocols on Show My Homework so please look out for this. The first assessments will begin next week; some subjects will have more than one assessment and others will just have one but they will be broadly reflective of the mock exam content.

We understand what a turbulent and unsettling time this is for our students and, indeed, for you. We hope that these assessments give students an opportunity to demonstrate the progress they have made and want to reassure you that they will not form the sole basis of any teacher assessed grade.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs C Knight
Deputy Headteacher