



The Priory School

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Dear Parents / Carers,

12th November 2021

Yesterday evening, Ofqual published further information about GCSE grades for 2022, including contingency plans should GCSE examinations not go ahead as planned next Summer. A letter to students and parents/carers can be found here, giving more detailed information about exam arrangements for 2022, including the contingency plan and adjustments already made to the examinations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-letters-arrangements-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022/letter-to-students>

GCSE examinations are still planned to go ahead but, if they are unable to do so, schools will be asked to award Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs), as we did for the previous cohort. To ensure we are able to justify any TAGs we award, we will need to have an evidence base to support our decisions and have therefore been asked to ensure we have robust assessment data for every student. Any assessments we conduct will be focused on the GCSE courses students are following and will not detract from their preparation for GCSEs; in fact, they should support students in preparation for their examinations.

As you are aware, students are about to sit their mock GCSE examinations. For some time we have hinted to students that, should we be required to award TAGs, the mock examinations will form part of our judgment but this has now been confirmed. I know how hard the vast majority of Year 11 have been working in preparation for their mocks and we certainly do not want to put any undue pressure on them but it is also extremely important that they, and you, are aware of the potential for their mock examination grades to form part of a Teacher Assessed Grade so there are no surprises next year.

I will address students in an assembly on Monday 15th November and will reassure them that, should we be asked for TAGs, we will not base this solely on one assessment. We will ensure we have several opportunities to assess students more formally between now and the start of the summer term so that we can gather a fair picture of their ability but the mock exams will provide us with assessment data sat in formal conditions, for which students have been thoroughly prepared. It is important to be aware that Teacher Assessed Grades are awarded based on performance and not potential, so we will be called upon to provide evidence of a student's ability to justify our decisions, as we were for the previous cohort.

Also attached is a summary of the interventions that are taking place to prepare students for the mocks; some of these are targeted for specific students and others are an open invitation. The dates are for sessions yet to run but many of these have been taking place for some time. Students have been preparing for the mocks in lessons and provided with plenty of revision materials, which we will continue to do both in preparation for the final GCSEs and any formal assessments in the meantime

I appreciate how close we are to the mock examinations and acknowledge that this will inevitably cause some concern but please be assured that we will do everything we can to support students both academically and pastorally through this turbulent time.

Yours sincerely,

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

Mrs C Knight
Deputy Headteacher