

Thursday, January 26th 2021

Year 11 GCSE 2021 – Information Update for Pupils and Parents

Dear pupils, parents and carers,

As I promised last week, I write with more information for pupils and families about the approach being taken to award GCSE qualifications for 2021. Included with this letter should be three documents - a **current assessment grade** report for each subject, a report indicating the **predicted final grade** your child's teacher currently feels would be most likely, and a guide to how we hope to make our first 'virtual' **parents' consultation day** work next Wednesday, February 3rd.

The consultation run by Ofqual, the exams regulator, has been live for a week or so now, and finishes at the end of this week. The proposals in this consultation are as follows (I have updated these from my letter of last week, to try to be clearer about what the proposals look like).

- Grades will be suggested by the school, based on Teacher Assessment of work completed, and a reflection of the level of work that each pupil has produced in each subject.
- These are to be 'assessed' grades not 'predicted' grades. Suggested grades will **not** be 'predictions' of a grade that a pupil might have achieved had the pandemic not occurred, nor will they be based upon the best grade that pupil might have been able to achieve if they had taken exams as normal.
- Schools will only be able to suggest grades that are backed up by evidence of a pupil's work.
- To help provide evidence of standards being attained by each pupil, it is likely that exam boards will be asked to provide tests in each GCSE subject. These tests would be administered in a normal school environment (under test conditions), marked by teachers and then moderated by the exam boards. We await more details on this aspect of the consultation.
- These tests would most likely take place in May or early June.
- Other evidence of pupils' work will probably be valid as examples of the standard being claimed, including (we think) classwork and work completed at home. How this is to be interpreted by schools, though, is still unclear.
- Exam results could be published to pupils before the end of the summer term
- Teacher Assessed grades will not be changed by any computer algorithm or data check – the quality assurance of awarded grades will take place by exam boards before they are published by reviewing the quality of work submitted by the school.
- This quality assurance will probably focus on sampling pupil work as assessed by the school at each grade.
- Pupils would have the right to appeal their grades, albeit under limited grounds.

Although this consultation is not yet complete, and there remains much detail to be worked through, it seems likely that these proposals will generally be those that determine your child's set of GCSE outcomes.

To help pupils and parents begin to assess the likely final outcomes that can be expected in the summer, we have included two reports with this letter.

Current Assessment Grades

This report details the grades that your child was assessed by their teachers to be working at before Christmas. They represent teachers' assessments of past papers and other work completed, and are

probably best summed-up as the grade we would be submitting in that subject if we were asked to do so today. In normal years they would be based on 'mock' exams. Under the process outlined above, it is perhaps easiest to think of these current assessments to be grades we can currently evidence in each subject, and as a 'lowest-grade scenario.' It is very unusual (but not impossible) for a pupil's grade in any subject to go down from this point.

Final Predicted Grades

We publish predicted grades in each subject each year at about this time – primarily for two reasons. Firstly, to provide information for pupils when going to interviews for sixth form or college places, secondly, to provide parents and pupils with an early indication of what we think final grades **might** be looking like in each subject. Unlike the current assessments, which are very much rooted in pupils' work already completed, these predictions include a degree of professional judgement about likely potential for further improvement and are less definite. They can, of course, improve as a student's work improves.

I hope that these reports, and my explanation of how best to interpret the information they give, prove useful at what is a very difficult time for us all.

Year 11 parents' consultation day – Wednesday, February 3rd.

Now that we have shared some information about current assessment grades and potential predicted final assessed grades for your child, we want to be able to discuss these with you as soon as we can, and to provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about these.

I had already shared that we are planning to take all lessons offline on Wednesday to create space for a Year 11 parent consultation day between teachers and year 11 pupils and parents. This will be via scheduled online appointments, and there is a guide to the new 'School Cloud' software we are using to do this included with this letter. If you experience any problems with the booking process please email Mrs Mann, Head of Year 11, on emma.mann@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk. If this date is not convenient for you, again please email Mrs Mann and we will work out how to schedule something that works better.

I hope that this letter is useful for you, and that it provides enough information to reassure you in very uncertain times. We are looking forward to seeing you (virtually!) next week, and I hope that the chance to discuss things with your child's teachers at the consultation next week will provide further reassurance. In the meantime, if I can be of any further help please feel free to email me on alan.fletcher@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk and I will do all I can.

Best wishes,



Alan Fletcher