



Dear Parents and Carers of Students in Year 11

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. You may be aware that Ofqual and the Department for Education have now published their [consultation](#) on how grades will be awarded and that parents and students are invited to submit their views on the proposals.

As myself and colleagues digest this, I think there are some important elements that I should raise with you now. Although this is a consultation there are some important themes emerging that I think it is crucial that students and yourselves are aware of.

Extract 1) *“We do not propose to ask teachers what grade a student might have received if they had been able to take their exams. We propose grades this year should be based on teachers’ assessments of the evidence of the standard at which their students are performing; it should indicate their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills”*

This is a fundamentally different approach than the one taken in 2020 when teachers were asked to set a grade based on what they thought students would have achieved if the exams had taken place. In this approach, teachers will only be able to set grades based on work that they have seen from students.

Extract 2) *“We propose that teachers should only take evidence-based decisions about the grade they recommend their students be issued. In the majority of circumstances, greater weight should be given to evidence of a student’s performance that is closer to the time of the final assessment”*

This is a clear signal that the work that students do before teachers submit grades to the exam boards still matters; and that they still have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Extract 3) *“Students this year should be given time to complete their non-exam assessments, to contribute to the evidence teachers use to determine the grade the student should receive.”*

Again this is a reassurance to students that the work that they are currently being asked to do on Non-Exam Assessments will be taken into account and is another route through which they can demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Extract 4) *“We propose the exam boards could provide papers which teachers could use to assess their students. If teachers do not use the exam board set papers, or even where they do, they should use additional ways to assess students and to gather evidence of the standard at which their students are performing”*

Once again a very clear signal that the work done between now and the end of Year 11 is crucial. Content that students are being taught during this period of the remote curriculum will still be assessed later in the year and there is still the opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Extract 5) *“We propose that teachers should make final assessments of the standard of their students’ performance during late May and early June.”*

If this proposal is accepted then this will mean that students will have opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding until at least late May/early June.

Extract 6) *“We propose that teachers should not tell students the grade they have submitted to the exam boards on their behalf.” “The grades in 2021 will be determined by teachers and then, following quality assurance, the results will be issued by the exam boards, who remain accountable for the results.”*

This indicates that teachers will identify grades that reflect their assessment of students’ knowledge, skills and understanding. However, they will not be able to tell students what the grade is as this will be subject to an internal and external moderation process before exam boards issue a final grade to students.

Timeline

We do need to be aware that this is a consultation and that the final plans will not be in place until this consultation is completed. There is no timeline for the publication of the plans but it is worth noting that the consultation itself does not finish until 29th January. Following any publication from Ofqual of their final plans, we will then have to await further details from each exam board on how this process will work in each qualification. It is only at this stage that we will be able to set out to you in detail how the process will work at Kimberley School for each subject area.

What does this mean for my son/daughter?

I think there is a very simple message for every student in Year 11 at Kimberley School which is that

- The single most important advice that we can give you is that you need to continue to access the remote curriculum and do what teachers are asking you to do.
- You will still have many chances to demonstrate to your teachers what you know, can do and understand in each of your subject areas.
- If you didn’t do well in your mock exams, then there is still time to improve your grade.
- Your teachers are still teaching you new content through the remote curriculum and you will still have opportunities to demonstrate that you have understood this; you can use this new learning to influence the final grade you are awarded.
- When your teachers have finished teaching you the content then they will start to use lesson times to revise content you have previously covered; this revision will be really helpful in preparing you for any assessments that will take place later in the year

What does this mean for me?

If my son or daughter was in Year 11 then I would:

- be reassuring them that everyone (Ofqual, Exam Boards and their Teachers) want to work with them to ensure that they are awarded a fair grade this year; and that everyone wants to make sure they are not penalised because of things that are out of their control.
- be doing everything I can to make sure that they are engaged in the remote curriculum, and then contacting the school if I need support in getting them to engage.
- doing what I can to make sure that they maintain a healthy balance between school work and other aspects of their life; remembering how important exercise, fresh air and a healthy diet are.

Parents’ Evening

If you haven’t yet made an appointment for next weeks’ [parents’ evening](#) then please do so, as soon as you are able to. Teachers will be able to give you important information on:

- behaviour and effort in the autumn term
- performance in the mock exam and any gaps in knowledge and skills this has identified
- their understanding of how well your son/daughter is engaging in the remote curriculum
- the next steps your son/daughter needs to take to achieve the very best possible grade this year

It is equally important that you understand that teachers will not be able to tell you:

- what grade will be awarded to your son or daughter later in the year? This is because that grade will be influenced by the work your son or daughter does between now and the end of Year 11, indeed “Extract 6” above indicates that teachers will be prohibited from sharing a final grade as this will be issued by exam boards.
- what assessments will take place between now and the end of Year 11? This is because they cannot do this until exam boards have issued guidance on how the process will work for each subject area.

Teachers will focus the discussions on helping you understand what your son/daughter needs to do between now and the end of Year 11 to ensure they achieve the very best possible grade.

And finally....

Teachers are aware that on some occasions students are logging onto live lessons to ensure that their attendance is recorded on the register but then not engaging in the rest of the lesson. If this is the case, then failing to engage in the work being covered in these live lessons is certainly going to reduce their ability to show their knowledge, understanding and skills in any future assessments. If you think that this is something your son or daughter might do, then it would be helpful for you to make them aware of the impact that this could have on their final grade.

Finally, if you have any concerns at all about your son/daughter then please do not hesitate to contact the pastoral team who are still available through the school reception. We are still here to help.

Take Care

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A George'.

Andrew George

Head Teacher