



Dear Varndean families

Update on cancelled exams and predicted grades summer 2020

Friday saw the publication of Ofqual's guidance on the awarding of grades for GCSE in the summer of 2020. The full guidance, which is long and technical, can be read here [Summer 2020 grades for GCSE, AS and A level, Extended Project Qualification and Advanced Extension Award in maths](#)

There have been a number of emails from students and parents over the weekend that suggest that there is still some uncertainty about what this will mean for our year 11 students and the following bullets try to clarify some of these issues for you and your children.

- Grades will be calculated by schools based on the wide range of information they have already including assessments, practice exams and classwork completed before closure on the 20th March 2020.
- The grade submitted will be the professional opinion of the teacher and the school is not required to upload examples of work or assessment information to the exam boards.
- Our department teams will use the information they have to determine the grade each student is **most likely to have achieved** if they had sat the exam. Within each grade they will also have to rank every student and we must submit both pieces of information to exam boards at the end of May. The rank order will help exam boards establish whether a school has set the same standards as other schools. Boards may move grades up or down as a result of this analysis.
- We will take the time we have to get these decisions right; using the guidelines provided to make sure we are not being too generous or too harsh on any individual.
- Our aim is to make sure students are not disadvantaged by not being able to sit a final examination and therefore we will take into account how much progress students usually make throughout year 11 and in particular between PPE 2 and the final exams.
- Students **cannot be told** their grade. The predicted grades set by the school, and the rank order within those grades, are not allowed to be shared with pupils or their parents.
- Given the Covid crisis it would not be fair (or reliable) for teachers to base their predictions on assessments set since school has been closed. Any work completed in



this period can be shared with your child's teacher but it will not contribute to the GCSE grade calculation unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example a student has had an extended period of absence from school).

- However students are encouraged to keep working and learning (a six month gap without learning before starting college is not in their interest). If their college has set some research they should undertake this or they should be continuing with subjects to be studied at post 16 or starting one of the digital badge schemes shared in the last assembly. We will support this transition work with further resources where we can.
- While this guidance does not apply to courses awarded by BTEC or NCFE it is likely that the same principles will apply and we will treat these subjects in the same way as GCSE. However until we get this clarity students **should continue** with any outstanding coursework asked for by their teachers.
- Grades will be awarded by the exam boards in time for students to confirm their college applications and plans. Details of an appeals process against awarded grades is still to be confirmed.

Please can I also confirm that year 11 students remain part of our school community during this uncertain time. Wellbeing and pastoral matters can still be raised with school bases and teachers will continue to interact with students regarding academic issues. Please can we ask that you check your child is responding to emails from their school bases so that this contact is maintained.

Kind regards

Gareth Hughes
Acting Headteacher