

15th November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Year 11 GCSE Update

Following on from our Year 11 Information Evening, where I shared some key updates regarding GCSE exams this summer, I wanted now to update you further. If you were unable to attend this evening do remember that the information can still be found on our website at [OA Year 11 Information Evening.pdf - Google Drive](#).

Firstly, I can reassure you that the expectation still is that GCSE exams *will* go ahead this year – this is an expectation shared by the Government, the Department for Education, and Ofqual. Whilst there have been a number of adjustments announced, the intention is that year 11 pupils will sit exams in May and June next year. The adaptations discussed on our Information Evening are being finalised and published over the next few months. We will keep pupils and parents updated when the changes are published.

Since the evening we have had some further updates I wanted to share with you around both grading this summer and contingency arrangements if the exams cannot go ahead as planned.

Grading

You may have seen in news coverage that the percentages of students attaining high grades have increased over the previous two years, when grades have been awarded by teacher assessment. The government have announced that the national headlines for 2022 will sit midway between 2019 and 2021.

This means that awarding bodies will be adjusting the grade boundaries so that more pupils attain high grades in 2022 than in 2019. This is designed to be a safety net for pupils who may otherwise miss out on a higher grade.

The national headline figures will return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023.

Contingency Arrangements

Whilst the intention is that the exams go ahead, we are being asked to put in place a number of arrangements as a precaution, should the GCSE exams need to be replaced by Teacher Assessed Grades. These arrangements include pupils completing multiple assessments in exam conditions throughout the year. Whilst we are meeting these expectations through our mock exams in November, and Pre-Public Examinations in February, the academy will need to retain these papers for potential future use. We will ensure that pupils still receive comprehensive and meaningful feedback following these mock exams.

Oak Academy

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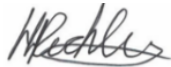
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If Teacher Assessed Grades are required, the approach will be near identical to the approach adopted by Ambitions Academies Trust in May 2021, which was approved by both Ofqual and the awarding bodies.

With the above information in mind, you can see the importance of all students sitting their upcoming PPE's. Where this cannot take place at the scheduled time due to student absence, we will look to rearrange these exams. I would ask however, where a student can attend, that you encourage them to do so.

If you do have any further questions, please do not hesitate in contacting me at Hayley.richley@oak-academy.co.uk.

Yours sincerely



Hayley Richley
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