



## HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

PDR/JDN

19 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer/Student,

I do hope that you are well and managing the demands of study, family and professional life as best as you can. I am delighted to continue to report that the quality of learning is still at an exemplary high level, with excellent reports from staff, students and parents regarding the live remote lessons. However, we absolutely understand that your, and indeed our, main concern is what is going to happen with respect to grading this summer? Unfortunately, we know little more than when I last wrote on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, however, we do know that the issues are being addressed and there is a commitment from the government to learn lessons from what happened in 2020.

The Department for Education and Ofqual have now opened a joint consultation for their proposals for the grading methodology this year. This is the link to the online survey, which closes on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January: [joint consultation with Ofqual on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021](#)

I have completed the survey and I urge you to do the same. Clearly, it is important that our suggestions are heard, but by reading and completing the survey, you will be made aware of some of the detailed and wider issues involved which are very important for you to understand. For example, you will be asked: what school assessments should count towards the final grade? Over what period of time should assessments be taken in to account? When should final grades be submitted to the exam boards? (Which also means when should formal teaching stop?) Should there be “mini exams” this summer? If so should they be optional or compulsory? Should data of assessments held by schools be externally audited?

The list of questions, with no real answers at this stage, goes on, hence the importance to please read and complete the survey.

My advice to all students in exam year groups is to play safe, such that you are prepared for every eventuality. What I mean by this in practice is:

- Assume that assessments from now on are important and may provide evidence to support your centre assessed grade.
- Do not worry about what has happened in terms of assessments held in school to date, but if you are disappointed by what you perceive your performance has been like, in future

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assessments, prove to your teacher that you have improved. If you were ill or self-isolating when an assessment took place, we will take this into account.

- Coursework (or non-examined assessments, as is the proper title), is covered in the consultation as to whether the mark for this should be included in the final grade. Until we know otherwise, please assume coursework will be an important piece of evidence if you have the opportunity to complete it.
- Please don't ask your teachers what your grade is likely to be – given the points I have already made, they don't know yet, as they haven't been informed as to how to calculate your grade.
- Continue to prepare as though you would be sitting exams this summer in terms of revision, so that if we do have mini exams you are ready and not surprised by the announcement.
- On a practical note, I would suggest you don't book holidays this summer until more is known about assessment dates, results dates and university/sixth form enrolment dates.

I do appreciate you are understandably anxious about your grades, but please be reassured you are in a very strong position given the experience and preparation you have had for the last 5, 7 or 2 years, depending on when you joined the school. Whilst some schools have struggled since last Easter in terms of remote learning, and indeed when in school, due to extended enforced isolation periods for staff and students, you have all had the best possible provision, so you are very much advantaged compared to many other students across the country. Additionally, please be reassured we know what we are doing, and whatever the final instructions to schools, we are ready for them and already have pre-emptive plans in place based on what we learned last year. As I have previously stated, our results in 2020 were a record for the school and I see no reason why we won't be in an equally strong position this summer.

However, the biggest impact on grades will be the evidence each student has individually to support their final submitted grades. With this evidence, we will ensure each student receives the grades they deserve.

I will continue to keep you informed as and when we have information to communicate and certainly when we know the outcome of the consultation, which will very much shape and influence how we all manage the next few months to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Please do let us know if you feel we can help in anyway and my best wishes to you all.

Yours faithfully,



Peter Roberts  
Headteacher