



14 December 2020

Dear Pupils, Parents and Carers,

I have some updates to share with you following my letter of 6<sup>th</sup> October concerning Assessments and IPMs. In that letter, I stated the following: *We do not know what the public examination arrangements will be for the summer of 2021. ... There exists the possibility that Ofqual may once again ask us to submit Centre Assessed Grades, and that if this is the case, there may be further guidance around what data points schools should use. No one would wish for summative assessments undertaken during the recovery period of the curriculum to be "high stakes" and as a school our primary intentions are to use IPM data a) diagnostically and to inform teaching strategies which are responsive to the needs of individuals, classes and cohorts and b) to inform reporting and progress monitoring. We may, however, be obliged to use some formal assessment points in future calculations to determine Centre Assessed Grades... We will update you as and when there is any further information to share regarding public examination and assessment arrangements for 2021.*

The government have recently published the following guidance document <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams#students-who-miss-all-exams-in-one-subject> .

In view of this document, whilst mock examinations, IPMs and other summative assessments remain as important from the school's perspective as they would in any normal year, they are less "high stakes" now than they were previously perceived. We all hope that the government's assurance that the summer exam series will run will come to pass, and note the plan for contingency exams being put in place for those pupils who are obliged to isolate during the originally timetabled exam sessions. We also note that there is to be a "validated teacher assessment process" for those who miss out on both the original exams and any contingency exams. This is as distinct from a Centre Assessed Grade and is essentially the same provision as the school would normally be obliged to make in any other year. Such a validated teacher assessment might be informed in part by a mock outcome, but the outcome of a mock alone would not be rigidly determinative of this grade and teachers would take a holistic view of each students' performance over time and their progress. Hopefully this will make the forthcoming mock exams for Years 11 and 13 feel less high-stakes for pupils who are suffering a greater than usual degree of anxiety around these assessments.



My previous sign off, nonetheless, remains applicable: *we ask that pupils do no more or less than that which we would usually ask of them – namely that they do their best and take IPMs and mock exams seriously. If they have concerns or anxieties about content covered under lockdown, exam technique or any other subject-related issues, they should discuss them with their teachers. They should also ensure that the School's Exams Office is kept fully aware of any health concerns or other pastoral circumstances which might impact on their performance, so that this data can be taken into consideration.*

I hope that this will prove welcome news and wish you all a very happy Christmas, and every possible success in any forthcoming exams.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D J Budds  
Deputy Headteacher