

1 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer and Student,

**RE: Reopening of school and assessments**

You will be aware of the recent announcements about the reopening of schools as well as the arrangements for deciding grades for those students who had been due to sit final examinations in the summer. We know that while students are keen to get back into school to complete their courses, there is understandable anxiety about the arrangements for re-opening and regarding the process around assessment.

Before they can return to lessons all students must have a negative COVID test followed by two further tests within a week. To allow Sixth Form students to get straight into their learning on Monday 8 March we are making arrangements for them to have their first test on the morning of Friday 5 March. More specific information will follow regarding times and locations but, it is essential that students attend these appointments so that we remain on track to get all students across the school tested within the first week. Once students have had their test on Friday 5 March they should return home. Lessons begin on Monday 8 March.

Once we return to school for lessons from the 8 March we will have the same system as before Christmas whereby Sixth Form students come into school for their lessons but wherever possible study at home during their study periods. Many of our students live within walking distance of the school or can make arrangements to get home during the school day. We know that there will be some students who will not be able to get home during the school day and there will be study spaces available for them. It is also our expectation that all students wear masks at all times inside the school buildings, including in lessons. This is in line with government advice and will be reviewed at Easter.

Year 13 will sit mock exams over a two week period starting the week beginning 15 March. These assessments are the delayed mock exams that students had expected to sit at the start of February and they will provide us with key information and evidence about students' progress and achievement. Year 13 will also sit further assessments in the first half of the summer term to assess the progress they have made before we, as a school, need to submit our final Teacher Assessment Grades, by 18 June. It is really important to point out that while these assessments are important for students, decisions about the awarding of grades will be made using a wide range of evidence. Students should not be concerned that any single assessment or set of exams will be the deciding piece of evidence in terms of the awarding of grades.

We would also urge parents not to contact teachers directly regarding the awarding of these grades. If you have concerns, you should contact the 6th form team to discuss these.

All schools must submit proposed grades to the exam boards by 18 June. This means that all assessments will need to be completed well in advance of this date to allow for marking, moderation and standardisation. Teachers and staff will be administering and marking exams for both Year 11 and 13 simultaneously during the period leading up to 18 June. We are working hard in school to produce a schedule that gives students as much time as possible in lessons while also ensuring that we have enough time to complete the marking of all assessments. You may find this [infographic](#) produced by Ofqual helpful as well as this more detailed [government explanation](#) as guides to the process of deciding final grades.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing support at this time. I am also hugely grateful to our wonderful students who continue to show enormous resilience, positivity and creativity in challenging circumstances.

Yours faithfully,



Mr T Backshall

**Head of Sixth Form/Director of Learning Key Stage 5**