Dear Parents/Carers and Students

**Year 13 Assessments 2021**

Further to our previous letter sent on 16 March 2021, we write to confirm and outline information regarding our school’s approach to A Level assessments and grading for 2021.

To recap from the previous letter:

**How will grades be awarded this summer?**

Grades for GCSEs and A levels will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards, internal quality assurance, and external quality assurance by the exam boards.

The national process defined by the Department for Education and the exams’ regulator, Ofqual is as follows:

1. Teachers will **assess students against a national standard,** which will be defined by the exam boards.

2. Departments will submit grades which will be **quality assured by the school / college**. This internal quality assurance process will have to be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards.

3. St Nicholas Catholic High School results will be **quality assured externally** by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our school or college’s evidence.

4. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, **then the exam boards will award students their final grades**.

5. If students do not think their results are accurate, they will have the right to **appeal**.

**School Approach to Year 13 Assessment**

We have been continuing to work closely with all of our departments to identify the most appropriate sources of evidence for each subject area, and to put plans in place for how we can ensure that the grades awarded are fair, just and subject to a robust quality assurance process.

We are now in a position to confirm that departments will be using additional assessment opportunities within a designated assessment window period (19th April – 28th May). Year 13 assessment timetable can be easily accessed by clicking on this link: [**ASSESSMENT TIMETABLE**](https://snchs-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ab%3A/g/personal/t_bradley_st-nicholas_cheshire_sch_uk/ERYrZlj_AVRMs1FGZJI7jUIBXDKv5jrNoiAJsCdksPg0sg?e=iymqdx)

The results of these assessments will be blended with existing departmental evidence in order to arrive at a grade for each student. The assessment window has been deliberately spaced in order to facilitate conditions for students to perform effectively. Please find attached the assessment timetable containing details for each subject.

**The Assessment Window: Key Details** (19th April – 28th May)

All departments have carefully considered which assessments are necessary within their subject area in relation to content coverage completed by students.

In order to support our students as best we can within the framework given by Ofqual, we have thoroughly designed a pathway offering a focused structure to learning and revision of subject content.

To this end, we can confirm:

* Teaching of new subject content will cease on **Friday** **26th March 2021**. All teaching beyond this point will be focused on preparing students for these assessments.
* All assessments will take place in a **classroom** and not in the sports hall.
* The maximum length of any single new assessment is **45 minutes**.
* All students will benefit from a centrally located revision guidance digital folder, which will contain information pertinent to each subject’s assessment approach, this link to this folder can be accessed by clicking on this link: [**YEAR 13 REVISION GUIDANCE**](https://snchs-my.sharepoint.com/%3Af%3A/g/personal/t_bradley_st-nicholas_cheshire_sch_uk/EivDq9lpgEdPgaXCi-BUgogBWNWiuReBshW80Y9M1U4K7w?e=J7jhOA)
* Additionally, all students will given **specific revision** guidance from departments that will help **them focus on the key topics** within the assessments
* These new assessments **will only form part of the evidence** that departments will use when calculating their recommended grade.
* If a student is absent we have factored in some time within our assessment window during which they can take an additional assessment.
* We will follow JCQ guidelines on any Special Consideration and we will write to you separately next week regarding this.
* All assessments will be standardised and moderated. Additionally, all evidence will be subject to internal and external quality assurance processes, consistent with all exam board requirements.
* Students who feel that their awarded grades do not reflect their ability will have the opportunity to take their examinations in the autumn series or in summer 2022. If they choose to do this, students will be able to use the higher of the two grades for future progression.

**How will the overall grade be calculated in each subject?**

It is crucial to note that teachers will be assessing students against a **national standard**, which will be defined by the exam boards. We are still awaiting finalised details of this standard from examination boards. As determined nationally by Ofqual, teachers are able to use a combination of evidence to submit for formal grading. The nature and weighting of the evidence submitted by each subject area will be based upon professional, academic judgement by Subject Leaders in relation to the coverage of the curriculum completed by students in each subject area.

We will also write to you before the submission of the grades to the exam board, so you are aware of the evidence that departments will be using in their deliberations. Unfortunately, consistent with national guidance, we will be unable to inform students or parents/carers of grades submitted to the examination boards.

**Information Evening**

We absolutely recognise that there is a lot of information for parents and carers to absorb regarding these arrangements.

To complement your understanding of our assessment systems and processes for Yr11 and Yr13 students, we will be holding an information evening shortly after Easter for parents and carers. Details of this event will be communicated in due course.

If you have any **immediate** questions, please email Mr Spencer at:

s.spencer@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk

**Appeals**

As determined nationally, the normal arrangements for reviews of marking and appeals of grades will not apply this year.

Following national guidelines for 2021, if a student wishes to appeal a grade they may, in the first instance, ask the centre (school) if they have made a clerical error. If the centre has made a clerical error then the centre must approach the examination board and ask for the error to be amended.

If the centre has not made a clerical error and the student still disagrees with the judgement then the student must approach the examination board via the centre and ask for the examination board to review the judgement made. It is important to note that a student’s grade could go up, down, or remain the same following an appeal.

**Year 13 Leaving Date**

The leaving date for Year 13 students will be confirmed after Easter.

**Thank You**

Thank you for your support, patience and understanding during these unprecedented times in education.

We completely recognise the circumstances that our students are facing and the uncertainty they have endured at such a crucial phase of their education: this has made it all the more vital that we get the process right for them through the thorough construction of our processes in response to the nationally issued directives.

The positive attitude, good humour, and fortitude shown by our students has been testament to their character and support given by their families and carers.

We wish all of our Year 13 students well during the forthcoming period of their school life.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T Bradley Mr Spencer

**Director of Sixth Form Assistant Headteacher**

**Assistant Headteacher Curriculum and Assessment**